

MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY
DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Vol. I.



Vandyck

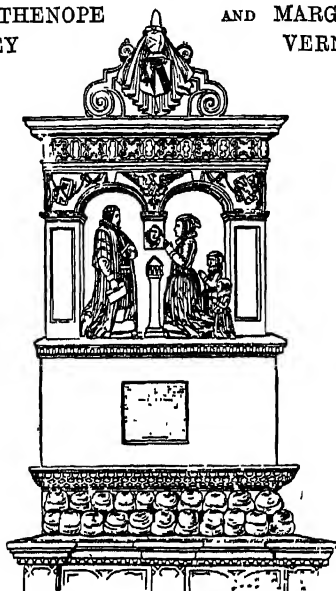
SIR EDMUND VERNEY, KT., KNIGHT-MARSHAL AND STANDARD-BEARER

MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

COMPILED FROM THE PAPERS AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE PORTRAITS
AT CLAYDON HOUSE BY

FRANCES PARTHENOPE
VERNEY

AND MARGARET V.
VERNEY



BLACKNALL MONUMENT AT ABINGDON

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time!

THIRD EDITION

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I

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June 1925

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TO
MY DAUGHTER

RUTH

A DILIGENT GLEANER IN
OLD CLAYDON HARVEST-FIELDS

L'ENVOI

THIS new edition of an old book is brought out in the hope that a younger generation may still wish 'to in Quier how the Verneys of Claydon doe doe.'

MARGARET M. VERNEY.

CLAYDON HOUSE,
1925.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION

BY

DR. S. R. GARDINER

IN 1845 Mr. Bruce edited for the Camden Society *Notes of Proceedings in the Long Parliament*, from the jottings of Sir Ralph Verney, and in 1853 he followed them up by a volume of *Letters and Papers of the Verney Family down to the end of the year 1639*, published by the same Society. The extraordinary value of the collection of MSS. preserved at Claydon House thus became sufficiently known, but though Mr. Bruce contemplated the preparation of another volume, he had not taken any steps towards it at the time of his death. The great mass of the papers were still in disorder, and much had to be done before progress could be made in this direction.

Not long after her marriage, which took place in 1858, the late Lady Verney's attention was attracted to the treasures contained in the house. Of the numerous portraits some were stacked in outhouses, where one was fastened over a hole to keep out rats. These she arranged and, with the help of descriptions in old lists, managed to identify most of the subjects. No less care did she devote

to the collection of papers, one bundle of which was endorsed by some fatuous person, 'Private letters of no interest.' She soon began to read them, all the more eagerly perhaps because she was even at that time somewhat of an invalid and compelled to pass a considerable part of her time on the sofa. The arrangement of the letters in chronological order was gradually completed, and many whole letters or extracts copied for easier reference.

Then the idea of writing the story of the family dawned in Lady Verney's mind. For this task she had admirable qualifications in addition to her extreme interest in the subject. She had received from her father, Mr. Nightingale, an excellent education, including a good knowledge of English literature. Her bright intelligence was quickened by her warm sympathy, and to her the personages of the seventeenth century, whose joys and sorrows are told in their writings, were as living as her own contemporaries. Gossip about the love affairs or the pecuniary embarrassments of Pen or Sue Verney, who lived during the Civil War and Commonwealth, flowed as readily from her lips as tittle-tattle about the pictures in the London exhibitions or the latest fashions flows from the lips of others. Nor was it only with the actions of these persons that she was familiar. She sounded their hearts, and came to know instinctively what each one of them was capable or not capable of doing.

No wonder, therefore, that the work which Lady Verney had undertaken fascinated her mind. Before she had proceeded far, she was attacked by the acutest form of rheumatism, arthritis, and lived for years under the infliction of constant pain. Yet she never from this cause laid her work aside, which indeed to some extent alleviated her suffering by drawing her attention away from herself, the last object of

which, in her days of health, she would have been likely to think. At first she was able to use a stylograph pen with difficulty, but at last the condition of her hands became such that not only did this become impossible, but she was unable to turn over the pages of the letters which she wished to consult. How great a difficulty was thereby thrown in the way of the composition of her narrative may be easily imagined. Mr. Bruce's books were of great assistance to Lady Verney in writing the first volume, and she has used them freely in the earlier part of the story, in some places adopting whole paragraphs.

What could be done for her by helpful friends was freely offered. Her own loving nature made helpful service easy. Her husband Sir Harry Verney cheered her by his constant interest in and sympathy with her work. Prominent amongst those who at this time rendered assistance were the Hon. Misses Frederica and Catherine Spring Rice, who were most energetic in collecting materials and verifying quotations, whilst much work in copying was entrusted to Lady Verney's faithful amanuensis, Mr. W. J. Morey.

After some hesitation Lady Verney decided on bringing down her work to 1650, the year of the death of Sir Ralph's wife, as it formed an epoch in the domestic history of the family, after which Sir Ralph's son, young Edmund, appears on the scene, and we are brought into the presence of the generation which took part in the overthrow of Puritan supremacy and the restoration of the monarchy. Lady Verney herself had almost completed the first, and had sketched out and partly written the second of the two volumes now issued. What remained to be done by filling in gaps, by inserting quotations, and by some excisions where the narrative strayed too far into the domain of political history, has been accomplished by her daughter-

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in-law, Mrs. Verney, with the assistance of the Misses
Spring Rice.

SAMUEL R. GARDINER.

February 20, 1892.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST TWO VOLUMES OF THE FIRST EDITION

BY

F. PARTHENOPE LADY VERNEY, DECEMBER 8, 1889

THE value of contemporary records, even of the purely private life of the letter-writers of bygone centuries, has only been acknowledged within very late years. It almost required an apology when such home-spun materials were presented to the public. Now, however, we are deluged by a mass of documents unearthed by the Historical Commission; and it will be long before the information thus acquired can be worked into the common stock.

The period before and during the Civil War, to which the Verney letters so largely belong, must always be supremely interesting to us as the turning point in English History, especially when seen through the eyes of those who lived and wrote in those anxious times.

Though facts may have been misapprehended by them, though their opinions may have been mistaken, what cannot be wrong is the vivid record of the atmosphere in which these men and women lived, and of the beliefs and impressions that surrounded them and produced the overt acts which alone have been chronicled.

The 'dignity of history' has a great deal to answer for. It has been supposed to concern itself only with reigns of kings, conquests and defeats, alliances and treaties, and the intermarriages of rather uninteresting personages, while the great stream of life of common-place people, what they thought and what they felt, has till lately been only considered important when the mass of convictions became powerful enough to create an upheaval of some definite kind. History is indeed written in a different spirit at the present day.

The collection of original letters belonging to private families is probably larger in England than in any other country. The great houses in France, Germany, and Italy have been ransacked by foreign armies; millions of papers have been destroyed in political and religious persecutions, fire and the sword have made away with the owners and their homes, and what remains has generally been swallowed up in the national collections. In England the papers still exist in their original homes, but till now they have been a sealed book. The stories of the perils they have gone through are harrowing to an antiquary. At Wroxton some peculiar writing was noticed on the paper cap of a carpenter by an observant boy; 'waste paper,' they said, 'taken out of those dirty old boxes'—in which was afterwards found the correspondence of a Chancellor of the days of Henry VIII. In another house some bags of rubbish were removed out of a closet to make way for jam and soap, and a parchment of a Knight of the Garter of Elizabeth's time dropped out. 'Oh, that's only the old paper the housemaids have to light the fire with,' said the housekeeper. When Sir. R. Puleston of Emral sold his goods and chattels, the Jews who were carrying them away asked leave to pack the smaller valuables in the piles of old papers which they said

they found in the garrets. Some wise man took the trouble to look into them before they were removed, and a number of letters of Margaret of Anjou were found amongst them, of whose writing not a scrap had previously been known to exist.

When the present possessor of Claydon, Sir Harry Verney, came to live there, he found a wainscoted gallery at the top of the house, forty feet long, full of boxes on tressels containing bundles of letters, acres of parchment, charters and pardons with the great seals attached, early editions of plays, account books, terriers and rent-rolls—these literally, as their name implies, strips of paper stitched together, many feet in length, and in this case dating from the time of Henry VII.—‘Mercuries,’ diurnals of the period of the Civil Wars, ‘newes letters’—the early form of newspaper before the printed manner of promulgating news had been invented—all these were ‘stacked’ round the room. Some few were touched by damp; some, where the paper was at all greasy, gnawed by rats; but they were generally in very good condition.

The letters related to the private concerns of the Verneys, who owned the Manor of Claydon for fourteen generations, beginning with Sir Ralph, Lord Mayor of London in 1465 and M.P. for London in 1472, and going down to Mary Verney created Baroness Fermanagh, who died unmarried in 1810.

These years include the most stirring periods of English history. The Verney records are only those of an ordinary gentleman’s family of the higher class, mixing a good deal in the politics of their times, with considerable county and local influence; Members of Parliament, sheriffs, magistrates, soldiers—never place-men—marrying in their own degree, with no splendid talents or position to boast of, no crimes

either noble or ignoble to make them notorious, and, for that very reason, good average specimens of hundreds of men and women of their age. Their actions, their opinions and beliefs, their thoughts about public affairs and home perplexities, their joys and sorrows, their habits of life and manners were not too fair and good, or again too evil, to be shared by households of their own class, so that we come nearer to the ordinary public opinion and social standards of their day than by reading of those exceptionally great men who only partially represent their age, and yet which history has brought before us almost exclusively. Most of the work of the world is done by average men and women, and the personal records of the Verneys, touching on small matters as they generally must, are not without a very general interest in the great history of their country. The materials are only too voluminous—there are 30,000 letters up to the date of Sir Ralph's death in 1696. Sometimes there is a letter for every day in the year, with a copy of the reply subjoined by Sir Ralph and carefully docketted by his son Lord Fermanagh, with an interpretation of the ciphers, initials, devices to conceal names of places and persons which in these troublous times were frequently used. The paper on which they write is coarse, with untrimmed edges, but is strong and lasting. The handwriting of the men is for the most part bold, clear, and good, but the education of the women in the seventeenth century was evidently very inferior to that of the time of Elizabeth; their penmanship is execrable, and their spelling purely phonetic. Lady Sussex (a clever woman and a very great lady, who married three Earls in succession after the death of her first husband, Sir Henry Lee) has considerable doubts about her H's—. Mr. Bakon,' half nephew of the Chancellor, 'his heer and is brother'—'will you get me a Member of

the Hoper hose' (the upper house). It requires some apprenticeship to recognise Yorkshire, St. Alban's and Lincoln's-inn-Fields in 'Oyskescher,' 'Sentarbones,' and 'Lingeslinds fildes.' 'Amazes me' is written 'A maisis mee': and Lady Sussex was no exception. Lady Verney's two sisters, clever women of the world and accustomed to the best society of the day, write and spell much after the same fashion.

The great mass of letters was preserved by Sir Ralph Verney, the then head of the family. He was one of those useful men who seem to regard every scrap of written paper as sacred. He kept everything; notes in answer to invitations, old bills, broadsides, doggerel verses, foul copies of orders to bailiffs, attorneys' accounts, tailors' bills, etc., leaving it to posterity to select what was valuable. Posterity, however, is very capricious, and is apt to cast aside all sorts of grand things committed to its charge, and to find interest in petty details supposed to be beneath its notice.

The materials are so abundant that in two volumes it has been only possible to reach the year 1649-50, after the execution of the King and the death of some of the principal actors in the family history. This period includes the story of the chivalrous, high-minded, honourable Knight-Marshal, Sir Edmund Verney, torn in pieces by his attachment for his master Charles, whom he had served almost from their common boyhood, and his belief that the party of the Parliament was in the main right, who chose rather to lose his life in battle than to continue the struggle to fulfil such conflicting duties.

His son was the painstaking, conscientious Sir Ralph, somewhat formal and precise, most upright of men, writer of 'Notes of the Long Parliament,' of which he was a Member, who, when he considered that his party was going too far,

preferred exile for about ten years rather than sign the Covenant in which he did not believe, or agree to measures which he thought to be wrong. For this his estate was sequestered, and he himself ousted from Parliament.

The gallant young Cavalier, Sir Edmund the younger, brother to Ralph, brave, loyal, affectionate, unswerving in his convictions and in what he believed to be his duty, who, when little more than thirty, was put to death in cold blood after the storming of Drogheda; the scapegrace Tom; the clever, shrewd, worldly, exacting Lady Sussex, and the two sisters Mrs. Eure and Mrs. Isham, Ralph's aunts, figure in the earlier part of these volumes. Later, especially after Ralph is exiled to Blois, are long letters, describing what is going on in London from 1643 to 1649, from Dr. Denton, a mild Royalist, kind-hearted, cynical, clever; from Sir Roger Burgoyne, M.P. for Bedfordshire, who had espoused the ultra side in Parliament; from Colonel Henry Verney, selfish, self-seeking, faithless, who only considered his own interests; and from the charming Mary, Ralph's wife, painted by Vandyke, who was sent by her husband to London to try and negotiate his return. Married to him as the heiress of Abingdon, etc., when only a child herself, most devoted of wives and most tender of mothers, she wore herself out by her exertions and her journeys, generally on horseback, and died when only thirty-three after her return to her husband at Blois just as her efforts had been crowned with success.

The materials had to be collected painfully, a few lines here and a few words there, out of hundreds of letters otherwise perhaps quite uninteresting; but in such a case as that of Sir Ralph, after reading again and again, in a thousand different forms, the most minute details of his thoughts, his feelings, his difficulties and anxieties on every

possible subject, one grows almost more intimate with him than with any living friend of the present generation, and it becomes a work of conscience to attempt, with the best skill one can bring to bear on the subject, to piece together into a coherent whole the character and fortunes of men and women so mixed up with the political struggles and the Civil War in England during those momentous years from 1630 to 1650.

F. PARTHENOPE VERNEY.

.
The MS. was left tied up and labelled 'A Birthday Gift for my dear Harry, December 8, 1889.'

.
The following spring Frances Parthenope Lady Verney passed away—and to the monuments in the church of the many good women, her predecessors at the House, another has been added to her memory as 'a lover of Claydon and the Chronicler of its Past.'

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CLAYDON HOUSE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY - NORTH FRONT
(From an old Pencil Drawing)

MEMOIRS OF THE VERNEY FAMILY

CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE AND THE HOUSE-KEEPING AT CLAYDON.

THE house at Claydon is spoken of as having been rebuilt in the reign of Henry VII., but there had been an 'ancient seat' on the spot in the days of the De la Zouches and Cantelupes, from whose descendants Sir Ralph Verney, Lord Mayor of London in 1465, acquired the property. A pencil sketch exists of uncertain date, which represents one phase of the old building, with gables in 'corbie steps.' Its lines were framed on the initial letter of the king's name, H

during the time of the Heuries, E during that of Edward and Elizabeth, and the fashion seems to have lasted into the reign of James I.

Although altered, added to, almost transmogrified, the form of the ancient manor house may still be traced at the core of the present building. The central narrow part, joining the two blocks, consisted, until forty years ago, of two rows of rooms back to back, so that the ends of the house could only be reached by passing through a whole suite: passages were little used in domestic architecture. None of the walls were at right angles; the floors rose and fell again in the same room to a difference of three or four inches in level; it was like walking over a ridge in a ploughed field; and a ceiling would vary in height as much as six inches in a length of thirty feet. A great chimney, with chimney corners on the ground floor, ran up the centre of the house, belonging to the hall-kitchen; another was in the 'Tenants' Hall.' These were probably the only two which the house contained at the time it was built. As late as the reign of Elizabeth, Harrison, in his 'Description of Britaine' prefixed to Holinshed, observes, 'Old men have noted three things marvellously altered in England within their sound remembrance. One is the multitude of chimnies—in their younger days there were not above two or three, if so many, in most uplandish "towns" in the realm (the religious houses and manor places of the lords excepted), but each made his fire against a reredosse in the hall, where he dined and dressed his meat. . . . Now we have many chimnies and yet our tenderlings complain of rheums, catarrhs and poses. Then had we none but reredosses; and our heads did never ache.'

Originally the fire was made in a hole in the earth or hearth,¹ shut down by a cover when the family went to bed—the 'couverfeu' (curfew) of William the Conqueror's edict. The reredos was a movable back to the fire, which was in time transferred to the wall; the chimney formed a

¹ Hearth is defined by Dryden as the 'pavement of a room where a fire is made.'

small chamber with settles on each side, and 'dog irons' or 'andirons' in front to support the logs of wood. Three 'reredosses,' with the family crest of the Phoenix in flames, were found in the outhouses at Claydon (one dated 1664, belonging to Sir Ralph), and several pairs of andirons.

In the central chimney at Claydon, a small chamber of concealment was found (when the house was repaired forty years ago), in which ten men could stand upright, a 'priest's hole or conveyance,' the secret of which had been so well kept as to be altogether forgotten; such hiding-places were known only to the owner of a house and his eldest son, and were handed down with solemn secrecy to the next generation. At Claydon the room was ingeniously masked by a blind passage in the middle storey, and was completely dark. It must have been entered by a trap-door at the top of the house; where, too, was a concealed door leading to a small private stair, long since destroyed, but of which the stone heads of the steps could still be traced. If enemies forced their way into the house, a man might escape up the public stair, *down* the secret stair, and out by a door less likely to be strictly guarded than the other issues.

It is an illustration of the probable origin of half the ghost stories *de rigueur* in old houses, that this room where the trap-door and stairhead required all prying investigations to be discouraged, was the haunted chamber of the place. The particular apparition most likely varied with the period; at Claydon the ghost of Sir Edmund Verney, the Knight-Marshal, as the most marked man of the family, was the one whose appearance had survived. He was supposed to be looking for the hand, severed from his body at the battle of Edgehill, which, according to tradition, had been found, still holding the king's standard, though the body itself was lost.

There was probably little or no glass in the house of Henry VII.'s time; linen steeped in oil was the substitute, or wooden shutters closed only at night, still to be seen in Spain and South Italy. The glazed casements of the Dukes of Northumberland were removed for safety when the family left Alnwick, and Sir Thomas More in his

'Utopia' mentions that 'there were glass windows in most of the houses' of his ideal country, as a proof of its advanced civilisation.

The rough walls of the rooms were covered with tapestry or wainscot. The tapestry at Claydon, mentioned in the old lists, has all disappeared, but much of the wainscot remained in garrets and outhouses. The 'use of the wainscot' was esteemed so important that it is specifically granted to Sir Edmund in 1634, in the lease of the house which he took in Covent Garden, and all the separate pieces are enumerated. 'Stock-locks' on the doors were also a luxury; when this same London house was let, it was mentioned as quite a new idea that, as the doors are so badly injured by the continual pulling off and putting on of the locks, they might as well be left on permanently. All classes were content to endure an amount of cold which we should find unbearable, from the absence of fires and the extreme airiness of houses where no windows or doors ever fitted.

In 1620, when Sir Edmund took possession of Claydon, after it had been leased to the Giffards, he was so hampered by money difficulties, and by the bad condition in which the estate was left by his tenants, that he could do little to improve the house.

There are three inventories; the first ordered by Sir Ralph in 1645, the next in 1740, and the third quite at the end of the 18th century, which together give some idea of the growth of a country house.

Wheat had been stored on the oak floor of the dining-room when threshed, but it must be seen that 'the cullor of the boards be not hurt.' The bedrooms seem to have been in sets, with an inner dressing-room with no separate access, such as 'the First Brown Lodgings, the Middle Brown Lodgings, and the Further Brown Lodgings,' and there is 'ye studdy over the greate porch,' Sir Edmund's closet. Sir Ralph writes to his wife about—'The odd things in the roome my mother kept herself, the iron closet, the little roome betweene her bed's head and the backstairs'—evidently a secret place—'the little and greate Fripperics [hanging closets for gowns],

your owne greene wrought velvet furniture, the red velvet furniture, the looking-glasses (there should bee at least four), leather carpets for the dininge and drawinge rooms, the stooles with nailes guilt, the great cabanet like yours, the tapestry, the great branch candlestick, all such wrought worke as my mother had from London and was not finished, the booke of martirs and other bookes in the withdrawing-room, the preserving-room, the spicery with furnaces, brewing vessels, and a brass skillett; plat left for the children's use, all the lockes that are loose in the closet'—such was the interior of old Claydon in 1645.

The house is situated on a gentle slope sheltered from the east and north—our ancestors showed a strange dislike to wind in the positions they chose for their dwellings (as opposed to castles intended for defence), and none at all to damp, which is to us more objectionable; the difficulty of obtaining fuel may account for their preference of what seemed to them warm—and to us low situations. To the east of the courtyard and stables, which bear the modern date of 1754, lies a straggling mass of building of every possible description. A great house provisioned itself with little help from the outer world; the inhabitants brewed and baked, churned and ground their meal, they bred, fed and slew their beeves and sheep, and brought up their pigeons and poultry at their own doors. Their horses were shod at home, their planks were sawn, their rough ironwork was forged and mended. Accordingly the mill-house, the slaughter-house, the blacksmiths', carpenters', and painters' shops, the malting and brewhouse, the wood-yard full of large and small timber, the sawpit, the outhouses full of all sorts of odds and ends of stone, iron, bits of marble, carved woodwork, and logs cut for burning—the riding-house, the laundry, the dairy with a large churn turned by a horse, the stalls and styes for all manner of cattle and pigs, the apple and root chambers, show how complete was the idea of self-supply and independence of trade of any kind at Claydon as in other country-houses. Of the 'Dove Cottis,' we read continually in the letters, as a dozen pigeons were an acceptable present to

friends in London, almost preferred indeed to the venison which Sir Ralph was very generous in distributing.

In a series of graduated little pools in the garden called 'the Stews,' belonging to the old Roman Catholic days, the fish caught in the larger ponds below were kept for immediate use. A supply of wild fowl was obtained from a Decoy 'celebrated in the neighbourhood,' observes Browne Willis, leading by a long watercourse from a great pool about a mile away into the heart of the 'Charndon and Great Sea woods.' Partridges, woodcocks, snipes, and larks are mentioned as delicacies. The difficulty of keeping cattle and sheep alive in winter on the scanty stores of hay was so great, that until the middle of the seventeenth century they were killed and salted down early in the autumn. In the Northumberland Household Book of the reign of Henry VII., it appears that fresh meat was eaten only between Midsummer and Michaelmas. The frequent mentions of skin diseases show how the salt diet, almost unrelieved by vegetables for many months, told upon the health particularly of the women and children ; so fish and game were most valuable.

Matters were, however, improving in the days of James and Charles I. Salt meat was now only used after Martinmas, potatoes had been introduced by Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Ralph is intent upon many sorts of salad and vegetables which he sends from France between 1644 and 1653. That they were not altogether new, is evident from the cynical remarks of his uncle, Dr. Denton. On receiving the presents of seeds and plants from his nephew, he often declares that he 'cannot see they are much better than the sallats he has already.' Ralph on his return is very anxious for the welfare of the vines and fig trees, the roots, seeds, flowers, and ornamental trees, which he gets over from Holland and France, and, in spite of Lord Macaulay's statement to the contrary, it is clear that much attention was beginning to be paid to gardens and pleasure grounds. We hear of the 'Persian tulips and ranuncules' sent him by his son at his particular request, apparently from Holland ; the pinks, gilliflowers, melon seeds, and pear-grafts ; 'the exact

July 27,
1648.

fine gardens' at Claydon are mentioned in 1694 by Cecilia Fiennes. The woods were always a great feature of the Claydon Estate, and the arts of wood-craft and forestry amongst the constant interests of its owners. Sir Ralph desires his steward to go and see 'Cozen Smith's hedges at Akeley,' which are grown in a west-country fashion, and to give him his opinion of them.

Within doors the activity of the family and household was as great and as multifarious as without. The spinning of wool and flax (so universal that an unmarried woman of any class was called a 'spinster'), the fine and coarse needlework, the embroidery, the cooking, the curing, the preserving, the distillery that went on, were incessant. The excellent linen, spun at home and woven in the cottage handlooms, was so valuable that it was left by will with great particularity. Margaret, Lady Verney, is as careful to which of her daughters she will leave her 'best sheets,' and to whom 'the second best,' and the 'table clothes,' as about the destination of her diamonds, and though her children are a loving family, there is nearly a disagreeable quarrel between Sir Ralph and his sister Pen, when she prefers money, and he allows her only 8*l.* for the sheets in question. As 10*l.* at the time is the price of a good horse, this sounds a quite sufficient sum.

The work with the needle and the wheel was a very necessary part of a lady's education, and as some of the poorer relations of the family resided in great houses as 'waiting gentlewomen' (the equivalents of the pages of the other sex), they were useful and welcome in carrying out these important household labours. There are letters from five or six of these ladies, connected with the Verneys, well born, well bred, and as well educated as their neighbours, who seem to have been treated with great consideration. 'Sir George Strickland's daughter is my lady's gentlewoman' to Lady Sussex, and Sir Ralph's cousin, Lady Hobart, is very anxious, when she becomes poor and a widow, that he should obtain the place for her daughter 'Frank.' Doll Leeke, another cousin, is living with Lady

Vere Gawdy and her daughter-in-law, Lady Mary Feilding, who are both warmly attached to her. She is busy embroidering a bed on one occasion, and writes to Sir Ralph in London to help her with the silks and crewels required for it.

Lace-making had been introduced into Bucks by Catherine of Aragon, whose dowry was partly derived from the revenues of Steeple Claydon. She was visiting at a house in Buckingham, still standing, when she received the news of the victory at Flodden Field. 'St. Katern's day' was held as a festival in her honour until not long ago, by the makers of pillow-lace in Buckinghamshire; and the allusion to

'The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids who weave their thread with bones,'

whom Viola quotes as her authority for a song, shows that pillow-lace was commonly made in England in Shakespeare's time.

The work of the still-room, the 'preserving, conserving, candying, making syrups, jellies, beautifying washes, pomatum essences, and other such secrets,' the making of vinegar and pickles, must have been held by the family to be quite as important a part of their business.

Accordingly in the fruit season the ladies are very fully occupied. Lady Gardiner is excused by her husband from writing to Sir Ralph—'being almost melted with the double heat of the weather and her hotter employment, because the fruit is suddenly ripe and she is so busy preserving,' and this though their household is large, consisting of thirty persons. Mrs. Isham sends word to Lady Verney, through Sir Ralph, 'I praye tell yore mother (in London) I will doe oup hur sugar if she hath corrautes a nowe, for this last wicke ye windes hath bine so bige that most of them was blode off the treeses.'

June 22,
1639.

The remains of queer tin vessels of many shapes, with spouts at all angles, in the ancient cupboards of the Claydon still-room, and the endless recipes among the papers, show how the 'decoctions, infusions, and essences of herbs and

simples' were prepared. When a doctor wrote a prescription, he directed how the medicine was to be made. 'The snail water, the hiera picra,¹ the mithridates, orbiculi, Bezo-artis,' and the like, are all thus explained.

The fruit syrups, raspberry vinegar, home-made wines, currant, cowslip, and elder, were important drinks when tea, coffee, and chocolate were unknown. All three were introduced about the time of the Restoration. When Sir Ralph was young, the health of his bride was drunk by Sir Nathaniel Hobart 'in ale and cake, my wife and aunt will do the like,' showing it was the beverage for women as well as men. Some twenty years later, in 1650, Sir Ralph, in exile at Blois, writes anxiously to London for 'the quite new drink chocolate,' for his dying wife; his uncle sends directions how to make it, because 'the thing itselfe is not knowne in France.' The fashion however spread quickly, for a few months after another exile sends the invalid a still better kind from Paris. The next year Sir Ralph, travelling in Italy, mentions 'coffee, a berry out of Turkey, ground for a drink,' as a curious novelty, and Pepys partakes of 'the new China drink, tea,' for the first time in 1660, after which the use of it became common.

Claydon must have looked melancholy enough to Sir Ralph, on his return from a ten years' exile, 'to keepe company with the ghostes,' a widower and alone in the deserted house. The estate had been so long without a head, under the management of the steward, that, as Sir Ralph wrote to a friend, 'in these times our old servants are become our new masters'; but after the Restoration his finances were set in order; the pictures, which had been rolled up for safety, or carried abroad, were hung again in their places; and there is much told of rebuilding in the house and of improvements in the gardens. Claydon is once more a centre of hospitality.

Sir Ralph's aunt, Margaret Sherard, laments that 'my ill helth prevented me of coming to Sweet Claydon this

¹ At the Liverpool Royal Infirmary some old country women lately asked for 'hickery pickery.'

sooner for thers noe company nor plas y^t I like better than what I had found ther.' 'My wife and I are thinking what new peice of plate we shall find next time we come to Claydon,' writes Sir Roger Burgoyne in 1671.

May 12,
1671.

Sir Ralph delights to share his plants with his friends. 'I have received your present,' says Lady Vere Gawdy in March of the same year, 'and I shall indeavour to make them grow, but our soile is not for rarities, thorns and thistles is my portion in it, but now you are goeing to your parradise, may it afford you all the pleasure can bee enjoyed on earth.' Sir Ralph more than once sends Charles II. young trees from his nursery at Claydon. Sir William Boreman writes to him from Whitehall: 'Sir, I begg y^r pardon that I have bin soe long before I return'd y^u the king's kind acceptance of & thanks for the Quickenbury trees [a mountain ash] y^u sent his Ma^y to whome I deliver'd them in yo^r name & told him howe bountifull y^u had bin before in furnishing, or rather beautifying Greenw^{ch} park wth plants of that kind; they thrive exceeding well, & I should bee very 'happy to see y^u there, that y^u may see howe well they florish upon a piece of as barren ground as is in England. However, yo^r kindnes is not barren, w^{ch} upon all occasions I have receaved the fruite of,' &c.

We hear later of 'the fir walk' where the old man totters along, of 'the orange chamber' where he sits coughing and reading during his last illness, and where his meals are brought when 'he is too ill to get up for supper or prayers during his last week of life,' as his faithful factotum observes sadly; of the brick parlour and of the great hall opening out of the porch into the best court, which were hung with black cloth when he died 'loved and honoured by all the country round,' as his niece writes.

Next comes a catalogue of the eighteenth century. 'The damnask room,' the 'Lying in Room,' the 'velvet room with velvet curtains and squab'; 'three pieces of superfine hangings, Tapstry; one poeker with brass head,' in my lady's chamber; chairs covered with gilt leather in the matted

gallery; chairs with walnut-tree frames, covered with yellow silk flowered with silver, in the white drawing-room, while the 'middle brown lodging' has 'iron dogges, tapstry hangings, a silk quilt and Modena window curtains.' There are new pictures of my lord and my lady, but, alas! by Walker and Lenthall, instead of the Vandycks and Cornelius Jansens of the former generation. Some of the latter which were sent up to 'Lundun to be cleand and vernist,' were literally flayed alive, while at least one Vandyck and two Jansens have disappeared altogether.

The third account is quite at the end of the century, when the last owner of Claydon of the old blood, Baroness Fermanagh, inherited from her uncle, Ralph, the second Earl Verney.

He was a second son, and his elder brother died leaving a widow with an unborn child, so that for five months he did not know whether he should ever possess the large estates which he dissipated so unwisely. He was a man of magnificent instincts, great artistic taste and knowledge and boundless extravagance. Soon after his father's death in 1752, he pulled down the west wing of the house and built it up again; the architect Adam, of the Adelphi, giving the plans. Three large rooms, a great hall with marble pillars, and a ball-room 120 feet long, were filled with carved woodwork and plaster mouldings of great elegance and variety; the doors of the saloon were inlaid with ebony, ivory, and satin-wood, under the direction of Patrioli, an Italian artist. A central staircase, with steps like marqueterie, is a beautiful feature; the wrought-iron scrolls and wreaths of wheatears forming the banisters are of such delicacy and finish as to rustle at the tread of a passer-by. The proportion of the new rooms is very fine; the library is nearly a double cube, 50 ft. by 28, and 25 ft. high; the pink parlour or summer dining-room, with lovely carvings, gives the impression of being much higher. Lord Houghton, sitting down to dinner there, exclaimed, 'I like a room where one feels one can stand upright.' The pictures, the books, the furniture were all on the same scale of lavish expenditure

and taste; one bedroom was 'furnisht all with silver,' of which only an exquisite little mirror now remains.

Lord Verney fought the county in the Whig interest



A CORNER OF THE SALOON, CLAYDON HOUSE

against his rivals, the Temples of Stowe. He put William Burke into Parliament for his seat of Great Bedwin; he was the first to recognise Edmund Burke's ability, and gave him a seat at Wendover; he lent money with reckless kind-

ness to them and many others. 'It is past all conception,' Burke writes, 'the supineness, neglect, and blind security of my friend in everything that concerns him. He suspects nothing, he fears nothing, he takes no precautions, he imagines all mankind to be his friend.' The crash came only too soon. Before the house was finished the creditors rushed in and carried off everything, even to a marble chimneypiece for the library which had not yet been put into its place; the pictures were happily heirlooms. Earl Verney's wife Mary Herring died in the crisis of their troubles, and he himself was said to have escaped in the empty hearse which had removed her body. After a while he returned, probably to get a little money, and hid in the desolate house, to keep company with the ghosts in a still sadder fashion than his ancestor. An old man used to describe, within living memory, how, as a boy of fourteen, he had 'seen the old lord a-lookin' out of a window, and a-beckonin' to me.' The house was perfectly bare, but the boy and a neighbour got him a table, a chair, some food, and later a bed. The secret of his presence was carefully kept by the poor people at Claydon, lest his creditors should hear of it, and he remained hidden for a month. Half his estates had been sold, and he died soon after, forlorn and childless, at his house in Curzon Street. He was said to be 'an indulgent, humane, and moderate landlord . . . a great protector to all the poor within his reach.' His niece and heiress, the Honourable Mary Verney, pulled down nearly two-thirds of his new building, but still left a large house standing; she was created Baroness Fermanagh by Pitt in right of her borough influence, and seems to have lived a cheerful pleasant life chiefly in a villa near London. She remained a spinster, and with her the old race died out *en quenouille* in 1810.¹

Jan. 20,
1791.

Mar. 31,
1791.

¹ This only refers to the owners of Claydon. Lord Braye now represents the old Verneys, being descended from Margaret, daughter of John Verney, and great-granddaughter of the Standard Bearer. There are also descendants living of Mary Verney, the Standard Bearer's daughter, who married Robert Lloyd.

This picturesque story is left as Sir Harry Verney told it, who, inheriting Claydon thirty-six years after Earl Verney, and employing the sons and grandsons of the same workmen, had ample means of knowing the facts. Lord Verney was an M.P. when he died, and living in his own London house ; he may have concealed his visits to his dismantled home, but he could hardly have been as destitute and miserable as the compassionate local tradition implies. Sir Harry believed that Robert Adam designed the W. wing of the house, while he was at Stowe ; but letters recently found by the Chatelaine of Claydon, Lady Rachel Verney, prove that at least from June 1768 to Aug. 1771, Sir Thos. Robinson was the architect. The Saloon, the Library, and some other rooms had been already built ; he was designing the central Hall and Ball-room, and a Mr. Rose, ' the first man in the kingdom as a plaisterer,' was making the inlaid staircase. The architect promised that by Lady Day 1770—' you shall not see a Carpenter, Joyner, Mason or Bricklayer, Cart or Wheelbarrow in or about your house.' ' You will then enjoy a Hall and Gallery finished from the justest rules of Grecian and Roman architecture, and one of the compleatest Seats in the kingdom, where y^r L^{dy} and good Lady Verney will always have it in y^r power to make many people happy and y^r rooms always full.' ' These rooms will be reckon'd the noblest piece of architecture in the kingdom, when the Architect and y^r L^{dy} are no more.' Delays ensued ; some years after Robinson's death, the building was still incomplete, and Bernasconi was working at medallions and cornices, presumably from his designs. Research, kindly made by various friends, shows no mention of Claydon in lists of Adam's or Robinson's buildings. Was Adam at first consulted and then superseded, as at Stowe ? It is an open question—Earl Verney being, as Mr. Bolton says of Earl Temple—' a confirmed amateur.'



MIDDLE CLAYDON CHURCH
(From a sketch by Parthenope Lady Verney)

CHAPTER II.

THE MANORS AND CHURCHES OF THE FOUR CLAYDONS.

THE estate now comprises the chief part of the manors of the four Claydons,¹ Middel, Est, Botyl, and Steppel, as they are termed in the old deeds, but it was only gradually that the Verneys obtained possession of them, parting sometimes

¹ Brown Willis corresponded with John Verney, Viscount Fernanagh, in the early years of the eighteenth century about local history and genealogies for his *History of Bucks.* Some statements in this chapter are taken from his MSS. in the Bodleian.

with land in other parts of Bucks and the adjoining counties of Oxford and Herts—Fleet Marston, near Aylesbury, Penley, near Tring, &c.—to consolidate their property.

The church of Middle Claydon, the smallest of the three Claydon churches, dedicated to All Saints, stands within a few yards of the house, with the 'priest's door' at the top of a flight of stone steps overshadowed by yew trees, close to the library windows. In the last years of Henry VII. complaints were made to the Archdeacon of Bucks of the condition of the chancel, and that 'the Rector, Richard Colland [Cowland], absents himself and the parishioners hire a curate.' In the same year (1505) a new Rector, William Brodhede, was appointed, and shortly after the rebuilding of the chancel was undertaken. This happened during the long lease of 100 years granted by the Verneys to the Giffards, with whom they had twice intermarried. Over the high narrow door of the chancel is carved '*Rogerus Giffard et Maria uxor ejus hanc cancellam fieri fecerunt an'o D'ni 1519,*' the work beginning in 1509. The body of the church was pronounced by Sir Gilbert Scott to be 'good fourteenth-century work.' It is set at such a different angle from the house which it so nearly adjoins that the dwelling was probably first on the ground. Even with the utter disregard of symmetry evinced by our ancestors, which is one secret of the picturesqueness of their groups of buildings, it is almost impossible to fancy that the house should, without any reason of space or lie of ground, have been built askew with the church; whereas when the dedication was settled, the line from east to west, according as the sun rose on the morning of All Saints' day, would be carried out quite regardless of the bearings of the mansion.

Within its walls are monuments of the Verneys and the Giffards intermixed, of every variety of size and material. On the north wall of the chancel is a large brass of a knight in armour, Roger Giffard, builder of the chancel and first holder of the lease of Claydon, with Mary Nansicles his wife in coif and wimple by his side, thirteen little sons in gowns kneeling at his feet, seven little daughters in coifs at

hers, small as befitted their inferior status to their parents (dignity was denoted by size, as in the reliefs on an Egyptian tomb), 'On whose sowlls J'hu have m'cy, 1543.'

Mary Nansicles was a little known benefactor of Claydon, though her Christian name was associated with that of her husband as rebuilding the beautiful chancel. The Great War, which brought about so many strange meetings, brought us the most unexpected information about the figures on the old brass in the person of their direct descendant, Mr. J. Andrews Moriarty, a barrister and a learned genealogist of Boston, U.S.A. After serving with the Allies in the war, Mr. Moriarty visited the tombs of his ancestors in 1920, at Claydon and Twyford.

Mary Nansicles or Nansiglos came of a Cornish family settled in London for several generations. Her father, William, was Comptroller of the Great Customs, London, in 1457, and owner of a famous inn, 'The Bishop,' at the corner of Grey's Inn Lane; later the celebrated bookshop of Jacob Touson. The Nansicles bought estates in Essex and Norfolk. Of the thirteen sons, only five survived their parents: 'John, George, Rauffe, William and Nycholas' as mentioned in their father's will. John settled at Hillesden and left children. Sir George inherited the lease of Claydon, and was three times married, to Constance Dyke, Margaret Bardfield, and to Philippa 'sometime wife of Edmond Shaa, citizen and haberdasher of London' who survived him, and married again.

Sir George Giffard was active with Thomas Cromwell in the suppression of the Monasteries, and he must also have taken part in Cromwell's negotiations for the King's ill-omened marriage, as he bequeathed to a sister 'the cup and cover of silver and gilt that my lady Anne of Cleve gave me.'

There is an alabaster altar tomb of Margaret, second wife of Sir George Giffard, daughter and co-heir of John Bradfield de Chenfield, d. 1539; the details of her dress and jewels are beautifully given, and a tiny lapdog is pulling at her skirts trying to wake her.

Ralph married Mary Chamberlain and lived at Steeple-Claydon; their son Roger was a scholar and linguist; a fellow

of Merton, President of the College of Physicians, and Queen Elizabeth's trusted physician, 'wearing about his neck a jewell with the Quene's Ma^{ties} picture.'

Nicholas served in the household of Henry VIII.

Of the daughters, Anne and Alice were remembered in 1556 in their brother George's will, Jane married a 'Dawnsty,' and Prysewilde Strelley as a widow was among Queen Mary's ladies.

The plate inscribed below the Giffard brass is a palimpsest; the reverse commemorated Walter Bellingham, Ireland King of Arms, and Elizabeth his wife, 1487. The Verneys and Bellinghams were connected by marriage, and it seems curious that a brass scarcely more than fifty years old should have been ruthlessly turned over and used a second time.¹

A helmet with the Giffard crest of a hand is (pronounced by Mr. Cripps-day to be) probably a relic of Roger Giffard of the brass. 'Its shape is of the date 1450 to 1515; the spike on the helmet shows it to be an Armet, *i.e.* a Church helmet with a crest put up as a memorial; it is a fine specimen.'

The brass of the last chantry priest, Alexander Anne, is on the North Wall with a label, 'Miserere mei Deus,' proceeding out of his mouth, and 'orate pro aña dñi Alesandri Anne p'sbiteri.' He bequeathed a great bell and a legacy to the high altar of Middle Claydon and for the repairs of the church. 'Also 5 p^{ds} in the hands of his right well beloved cosyn Roger Giffard and Mary his wife, his executors, to find an honest prest to syng and pray for his soul and the souls of his father, mother, and all Christians,' who is to have for his prayers—wages, meat and drink, 5*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.* He refers to 'my godchildren, my cosyn Mary Darell and Anne Verney.' Alice Verney in her will, Nov. 9, 1542, wishes to be laid in the church before St. Anne's Altar.

There is a still older will by a former owner of Claydon concerning the two great wax candles of 12 lb. weight, to be burnt before the high altar of the church. William de Cantelupe gives these 'for the health of his soul and the souls of his ancestors and heirs for ever' (he looks both before and after), 'King Edward I., son of King Henry, giving licence.'

¹ See a paper by A. H. Cocks, Esq., in *Records of Bucks*, June 1898

The extreme anxiety of the dying man for his candles and the 'remains' of his candles is half touching, half ludicrous; he gives a 'toft' of about $24\frac{1}{2}$ acres of arable land of his own occupation in satisfaction of a mark, 13s. 4d. (the mark was only money of account, not a coin, and represented about 8*l.* of present money in 1390), to supply the torches which were to be newly furnished on the vigil of Easter, 'and to be kept burning for ever.' 'Whatsoever remains is to be made into other candles before the Holy Cross, the Blessed Virgin, and elsewhere in the Church, as the Bailiff of the Lords of Middle Claydon and the Churchwardens shall think most meet.' They are also to be witnesses of the weight of wax, and the provisions for the execution of his wishes are many and stringent. 'Thomas the prest' is bound very straitly 'not to embezzle or fail in finding, renewing, or sustaining the torches, or delivering the remains' (the holy candle-ends are much on Chantelupe's mind!). 'The Lords of Middel Claydon are to distrain for any deficiencies either in torches or remains'; he has evidently little faith either in the clergy or his heirs; each are set to watch the other. 'These are to have no power to release Thomas; and if it should happen, which God forbid,' he adds passionately, 'that my heirs should be remiss in demanding the service of the torches, or making distress for the arrears, any parishioner shall do it in our name!' 'For ever,' repeats the poor man at every clause with pathetic reiteration, thinking he had provided for his soul's wealth and that of his family satisfactorily, even to the end of time, and little foreseeing how short that 'ever' would prove, either for his candles or his memory.

George Verney is mentioned as presenting the Rector John Raves in 1554; in his will (1558) he refers to his daughters Mary, Ellin, Elizabeth, and Lettice. In the next generation Urian Verney and his wife Lettice have secured a place for themselves as close to the altar and the candles as possible, which seems to have been considered a position of great comfort and honour to the souls of the occupants, They kneel one on each side of a sort of altar, their hands

joined in prayer, and behind the man is a son, Edmund, who lived to be 'oon prest.' The epitaph contains an inextricable confusion of pronouns and relationships. 'I Urian, the sixt of seaven sonnes and daughters of Sir Ralph Verney Kt. at his death made this monument for myself and my wife Lettice daughter of Sir George Giffard, issue one sonne and I the survivore of my six brothers and twoo daughters [sisters], the one married to Sir Francis Hynde, Knighte, and the other to Sir Nicholas Pointz, Knighte. 1608.'

The south side of the chancel is almost filled by the fine monument which Sir Ralph erected to the memory of his father and mother, his wife and himself in 1652.

The list of Rectors begins with John de Blarewick in 1231. Brown Willis quotes from a parish register of 1538; the present one dates from 1630. He describes the stained glass in the east window of the chancel with figures of Sir Ralph Verney and Anne [Weston] with their arms and an inscription; which has disappeared. That Sir Ralph was buried at Ashridge in 1525. There are two bells of Chandler's, from the Drayton Parslow foundry, of 1664 and 1674.¹

The churchyard was altered by the last Lord Verney, and the tradition still exists in the village that 'he never prospered arter that, yo know, for why, he moved the dead. But they was all back again next marnin! safe in their graves!' 'What, someone carried them back, you mean?' said the hearer. 'Nay, none knew how, but there they all was,' replied the narrator solemnly, as befitted her supernatural history. The respect for the last home of those who can no longer defend it is very deep-seated in this country.

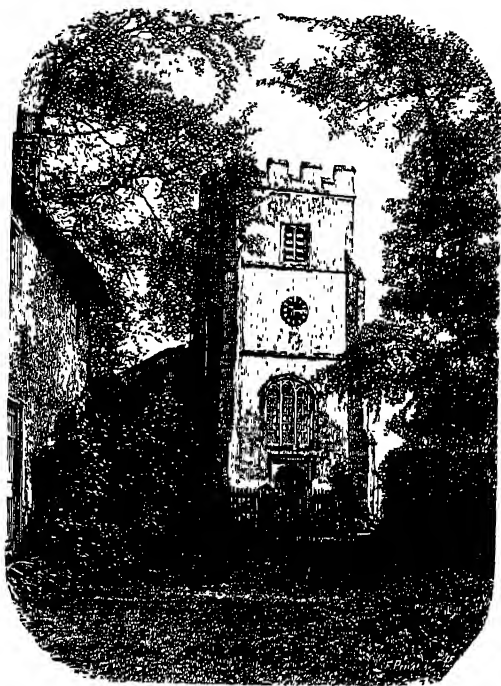
Middle Claydon was the first village in England to adopt the Public Libraries Act in 1893. The free access to books has promoted a strong local interest in the past history of the parish and its records, in which the names appear 250 years ago, of families still occupying the farms and cottages, such as Hinton, Coleman, Roades, Tomes, Webb, and King.

¹ A. H. Cocks' *Church Bells of Buckinghamshire*, p. 355.



MONUMENT OF VRIAN AND LETTICE VERNEY
(In Middle Claydon Church)

'Est' Claydon is the type of an old English village; a number of half-timbered black and white houses, with an occasional date from 1650, interspersed with great elms, stand in and out of narrow twisting lanes at every sort of picturesque angle, leading up to the old manor house, where



EAST CLAYDON CHURCH

Mr. Abell, sheriff in 1658, kept four horses, 'the 'Sizes being then held at Buckingham.' His only child Mary married Edmund Verney, the eldest son of Sir Ralph, and both he and his wife lived and died in the White House, which long preserved the dignity of 'keeping a ghost.' The unfortunate Mary, who went out of her mind shortly after her marriage

and often wandered at night about the churchyard and gardens in a weird manner, was the unquiet spirit. The story, as told in the cottages, is that the white lady haunted the house and especially her former room so persistently after her death that the unhappy widower got no rest. He removed the boarded floor, but without avail: the ghost walked along the joists; then in despair he drove nails into the joists, and filed their projecting heads into sharp points; the poor wounded ghost appeared no more! A brutal tradition to be associated with the memory of one who 'was very pious and gentle,' notwithstanding her sad state, with occasional respites of sanity, and who, in defiance of the legend, did actually survive her husband several years. The inn, 'the half-way house,' belonging to her, stood by what was once the high road from Buckingham to London, diverted to its present course in the reign of Queen Anne; it can still be traced as a mere track across the fields, though probably quite as good now as it was then. Richard Abell sold the manor in 1726, and it was bought in 1728 by Ralph Verney, Viscount Fermanagh. The Duncombes, related to the Hampdens and the Lees of Hartwell, also had a house and property here from Tudor times till the reign of George II.

The church, dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin, stands on a little eminence surrounded by high elms and overlooking the vale of Aylesbury. It has a short south aisle with Norman work. William Spyrke of Bottil-Claydon ordered his burial, in 1451, in the churchyard of the Blessed Virgin Mary of East Claydon, and gave two sheep to the lights of St. Mary and the Holy Cross. The church was carefully restored in 1871 by the friends of the Vicar, the Rev. W. R. Fremantle, afterwards Dean of Ripon. There is a marble monument to the Abell family. The parish register dates from 1584.

East Claydon was a rectory from 1218 to the end of the fourteenth century, and became a vicarage in 1421, and was held with Middle Claydon from the eighteenth century onwards. In 1607 the old vicarage is described as a house of

three bays, of timber, tiled, of six rooms, hall, parlour, and kitchen, with three small lofts above.

Brown Willis visited East Claydon in 1728, and mentions 'a most remarkable story' told him by the Rev. Francis Green, Vicar of the parish for sixty-one years: 'One Deverell, an old man, a Quaker, who falling into a ditch about forty years agoe refused to be helpt out again by the neighbours, whom he presumptuously told he should rise again the third day and with great vehemence opposed their assisting him, insomuch that he continued there till they forcibly drew him out'

A cottager, John Harding, in 1870 remembered seeing a yeoman, Parrott, bring his horse out of a small barn still standing, and start off with him to the battle of Waterloo; as in 1900 two gallant young Hinton's started in the Bucks Yeomanry and in the City Imperial Volunteers to the Boer war, from a farmhouse formerly Squire Abell's hostelry.

Botolph Claydon, from 'Botyl,' a word meaning a hamlet or place enclosed from the waste, or from Butt the boundary or butt end of the old Forest of Bernwood, is served by the same church. Botolph and East Claydon, after belonging to the De Mandevilles and De Greys, were owned, like Steeple Claydon, by Lionel, Duke of Clarence, and passed from him to the Crown in the time of Edward IV. They were connected with the convent of Bisham, and the Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, who appointed to the living. A well approached by steps, called St. Botolph's well (a corruption of Botyl), and the name of an adjacent farm, Muxwell (Monk's well), probably refer to some old monastic establishment, of which all trace is lost. A number of small parchment deeds, measuring two or three inches deep by seven or eight wide (the more ancient the deed, the smaller are its dimensions), still remaining in the muniment room, concern little purchases and arrangements between the rector or the owner of Claydon and the inhabitants, small parcels of land, 'tofts,' 'crofts,' and 'pickels,' which passed into the hands of the Verneys at different times. The earliest in date are generally witnessed on Sundays,

as learned men, able to write their names, were always rare in the country, and it was convenient to get a deed signed at the church door, where there would be a greater choice of 'clerks' in the congregation.

A deed of 16 Edward II. concerns the 'toft of Alice Avenel of Est Claydone,' and is witnessed by 'John called the monck, Roger le prest,' and 'John le bonde,' whose ancestors had been bondsmen.

Queen Elizabeth granted Coppesley Hill, abutting on Runt's coppice, to John Farneham in 1577; the Queen also granted a cottage and half an acre of ground in Botolph Claydon to maintain a light in the church.

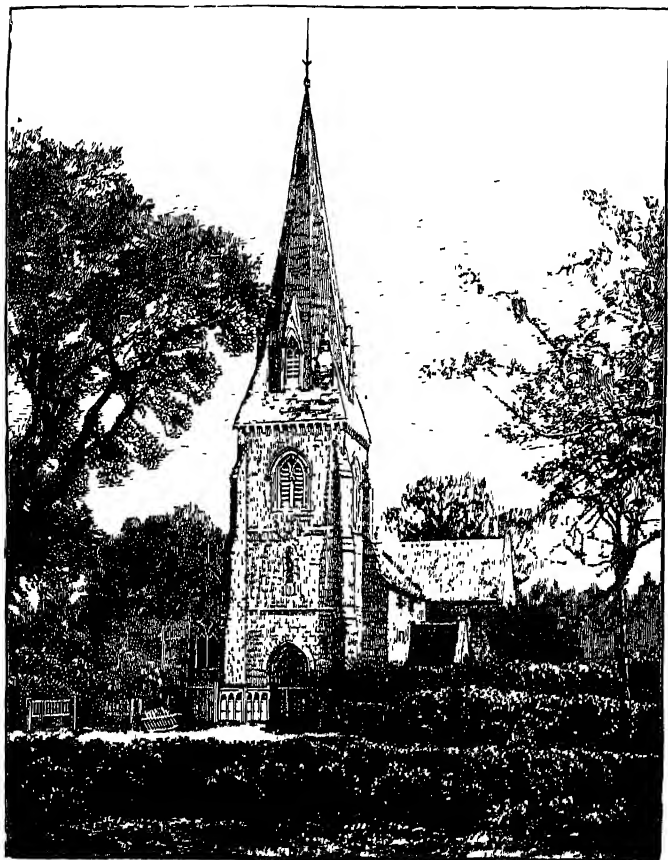
Botolph House, a substantial brick and stone manor house, stands at the east end of the village, shaded by an old cedar and a magnificent sycamore. The last Lord Verney gave his steward seven acres of land and 3,000*l.* to build a house on it, but the money was all spent in the foundations and the ground floor.

Botolph and East Claydon have now a public library in common.

In a distant part of the estate, in the midst of lonely meadows and woods, far removed from any main road, is a spur of land called Finemore, standing out into the flat plain towards Oxford, with a far-reaching view over fields, copses, hill and dale, arable and grass, stretching for thirty miles or more, to Edge Hill in one direction, and to Cumnor Hurst, the home of Amy Robsart, in another. In this most appropriate situation there was a tiny hermitage, which with 'meadow pasture and wood for repairing fences and houses' and 'passage for swine' was given by Henry II. to a religious house of the ascetic order of Augustines, who allowed the hermit 13*s.* 4*d.* a year. If the holy man did not live on acorns and the beauty of the position, it is difficult to see on what he fed, unless he condescended to a goat and perhaps a garden of herbs, for the distance from human help in the way of alms must have been great indeed in the thirteenth century.

Steppul or Steeple Claydon is much the largest village

of the four. In the days of William the Conqueror 'it was considered the most populous town' (indeed, a sort of capital) of the Lanna hundred; when 'Alric the cook holds



STEEPLE CLAYDON CHURCH

of the King, Claydon,' it is described in Domesday Book as possessing fifty copyholders or villeins, three cottagers having nineteen ploughs, and mast for 100 hogs, and as being worth

16*l.* a year, a sort of gauge of the inhabited state of the country round.

In 1120 Henry I. granted the manor to Edith, 'amasiam suam,' as a portion, when he caused her to marry Robert de Olleyo (de Oily or Doyley), son of the Lord of Oxford. After this she is called 'an eminent and devout matron,' and was buried in the Abbey of Oseney 'in the abbite of a vowess' on the north side of the high altar, in the church she had built in expiation of her misdeeds; being miraculously directed to the spot by chattering pyes, who were painted over her tomb. She bestowed much land at Claydon on the Priory, and bequeathed 'one of the villeins of Claydon, with his wife, children, and cattle in perpetual alms.'

A curious little deed in the muniment room concerns the granting of a piece of ground in order to build a 'common house,' a sort of village townhall where business might be transacted which was otherwise done in the church, greatly to the distress of the clerics. This house is to be 56 feet long and 18 feet broad, to the north side of the rectory threshing floor. 'The religious man John by divine permission Abbot of Oseney grants it to the proctors and parishioners of the Ville of Steppul Claydon to have and to hold.' They are to pay fourpence rent at the feast of the Blessed Virgin for ever, but if they do not 'pay up,' the convent, after three demands, may distrain and impound; and if the house go to ruin without hope of restoration they may resume the ground. The deed is signed and sealed by an official of Buckingham, 'because the seals of the churchwardens are not known to many.' Probably, indeed, they had none! The whole transaction shows an interesting little bit of village government, the tiny parliament of Steeple Claydon holding business transactions with the great Abbot. The Mote or Court for the meeting of the Hundred of Lamua was anciently held in the park meadow below the church (where are a number of ditches and earthworks)—another link in the intricate series of little local assemblies culminating in the Witenagemot, the parent of our present Parliaments, which our ancestors

had devised with that curious instinct of self-government inherent in the English race.

Steeple Claydon has been the dowry of a great number of royal ladies since William the Conqueror first granted it to his niece, Judith, Countess of Huntingdon. 'Edith [query Isabella], King Edward's Queen, held this manor,' says Brown Willis. It was afterwards held by Philippa, granddaughter of Edward III., wife of Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March; then by Cecily, Duchess of York, and was given by Henry VII to his wife, Elizabeth of York, Duchess Cecily's granddaughter. In 1508 Henry VII. granted it to Catherine of Aragon, Princess of Wales, on her marriage with Prince Arthur, and she held it again as the wife of Henry VIII.

Queen Elizabeth made a grant of some land charged with a 'maintenance of lamps in the Church of Steeple Claydon.' But the manor had been granted by Queen Mary (who inherited it from her mother Catherine of Aragon) to the 'famous Sir Thomas Chaloner,' of Guisborough, Yorkshire, who, as the family monument in the church records, 'was a great soldier and scholar, knighted by the Protector of Edward VI. He was by Queen Elizabeth for his bravery and learning sent ambassador to the Emperor Ferdinand and to Philip II., King of Spain.' He is buried in Chiswick Church.

The second Sir Thomas Chaloner was tutor and chamberlain to Prince Henry, eldest son of James I.; his nearest neighbour, Sir Edmund Verney, being also of the prince's household. His third son, Thomas Chaloner, was born at Steeple Claydon in 1595; after leaving Oxford he went abroad, and 'returned from foreign travel a perfect gentleman.' He married a Miss Sothabie, whose brother 'died from drinking too much sack.' He was M.P. first for Richmond and then for Scarborough; in 1651 he became Master of the Mint; he and his brother James (M.P. for Aldborough, and Governor of the Isle of Man) both signed Charles I.'s death-warrant.

Thomas Chaloner had a good deal of cynical wit. He

would spread a false rumour in the morning in Westminster Hall for the sake of seeing how the scandal would have grown by the afternoon; and he greatly exercised his friends the Puritan ministers, for whom he had scant sympathy, by publishing an anonymous pamphlet on 'The Discovery of Moyses' Tomb,' which they long thought to be genuine.

In 1656 at Steeple Claydon he 'built a house with a clock, for children to be taught in, and impaled part of the waste about the said house, which was called the school-yard, planted trees within the pale for the defence of the house, and settled 12*l.* per annum for maintenance of the schoolmaster.' At the Restoration he was excluded from the amnesty, and fled to Holland, where he died in 1661, aged 66. Charles II. granted the estate to Richard Lane, who had enabled him to escape after the battle of Worcester; he got hold of the title deeds, and refused to pay the endowment, greatly to the dismay of the parishioners, who vainly petitioned for it. Subsequently the Chaloners bought back the estate, and lived there until they sold it in 1705 to John Verney, Viscount Fermanagh. During several generations the Verneys kept up Chaloner's little school; but so far had that ancient seat of learning decayed when Sir Harry Verney became owner of Claydon in 1827, that the school was in ruins and the yard was used for bull-baiting. The name, still existing, of Bull Lane shows the route by which the bulls entered Steeple Claydon. The school was repaired, and in 1856 a room was added to it by Lady Dunsany, aunt of Eliza Lady Verney. In 1896 Sir Edmund Verney bought up the rights of the parish by consent of the Charity Commissioners, the money being vested in the Chaloner Trustees. In 1901 he added a hall, designed by Raymond Unwin, to the two existing rooms, and opened the building as the Chaloner Library in 1902, Steeple Claydon having adopted the Free Libraries Act. Miss Florence Nightingale presented 50*l.* of books to the Library, which has received many valuable local gifts, so that the village at length possesses 'a common house' as planned long ago by the Abbot of Oseney, and Chaloner as the pious founder is

still serving Steeple Claydon.¹ The name of the Manor Farm still marks the site of the old Chaloner House.

Cromwell encamped here on his way to Hillesden, as commemorated by a tablet on the Camp Barn.

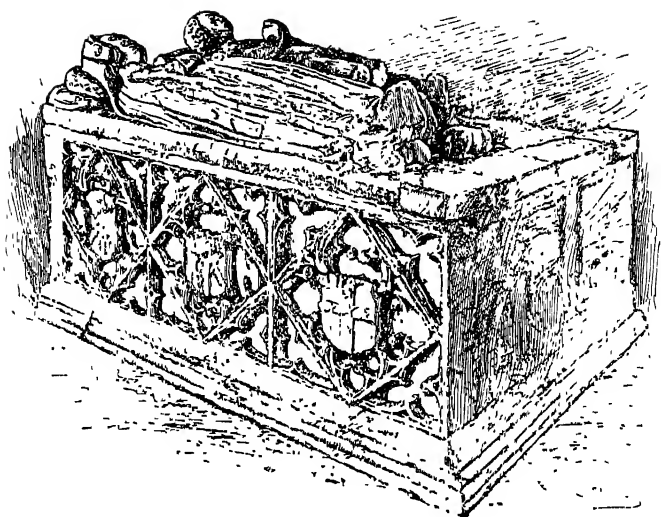
The Roll of Honour for the Claydons in the Great War shows :—

Middle	.	.	40 men who served including 11 killed.
East and Botolph.	67	„ „ „	9 „
Steeple	.	127 „ „ „	19 „
and several women.			

These villages, with their long historical past, are showing signs of great vitality and public spirit.

The church is dedicated to St. Michael; the spire was added in 1862 by Sir Harry Verney and his brother Frederick Calvert, Q.C., to the memory of their father, General Sir Harry Calvert. There is a monument to Sir Harry Verney and his first wife, Eliza, daughter of Sir George Hope, in the chancel; and the Chaloner monument already quoted also bears the name of Edward Chaloner, who died in 1766, 'a Lieutenant in the Navy above 30 years; he showed his courage in 10 expeditions in Eastern, Western, Northern, and Southern Seas.' A stone in the floor records the name of Charles, second son of William Chaloner and Christian his wife, who died in 1727. The vicarage, which was totally destroyed by fire in May 1899, had an oak-panelled parlour, with an elaborate plaster ceiling richly and grotesquely ornamented, said to be of the time of Henry VII. The parish register, dating from the sixteenth century, was much injured at the same time. A beautiful chalice of Elizabeth's time, 'tried in the fire, was restored as a gift to the altar by Richard Comyns, Michaelmas 1899.'

¹ The Rev. Walter Sotheby and his wife the Hon Mrs. Sotheby (*née* Spring-Rice) presented a book to the Chaloner Library in memory of the connection between the Chaloners and Sothebys; Miss Henrietta Hale and other descendants of Sir Thomas Chaloner have also sent gifts; and Mr. Carnegie contributed 250*l.*, divided between Steeple and East Claydon Libraries.



TOMB OF SIR RALPH AND DAME ELEANOR VERNEY 1528,
KING'S LANGLEY CHURCH

CHAPTER III.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE VERNEYS, 1165-1599.

THERE are Verney memorials in several parishes to which our attention has been called : to Sir Ralph Verney, died 1352, and Sir John Verney, died 1461, in Stogursey Church, Somerset ; to Isabella Verney, died 1413, wife of John Perrot, in Tenby Church ; to Leonard Verney, married about 1510 to Margaret Brothers, heiress of Shelswell Park near Bicester ; to Sir Thomas Verney and Alice his wife, *née* Tame, of Harthill Manor, Cirencester, and others ; but we have no assurance of their connection with the Verneys of Claydon.

Lipscomb's 'County History of Bucks,' traces the descent of the latter from the reign of Henry III., but Sir Ralph Verney, Lord Mayor of London, 1465, is the first of the family of whom we gain a distinct impression. He was a successful merchant living near the Great Market or Cheap, where was the hall of the Company of Mercers, close to 'Paul's Walk, the general resort for business and gossip.'

After the battle of Tewkesbury, Edward IV. celebrated the triumph of the White Rose by knighting twelve London citizens, of whom Sir Ralph stands first, on the very day that the dead body of Henry VI. was exposed to public view in St. Paul's. The following year, Sir Ralph was ^{Oct. 6,} elected one of the members for London in the Parliament ^{1472.} which settled the succession.

Edward, 'considering the good and gratuitous service rendered by Sir Ralph,' granted him several forfeited lands in Buckinghamshire; he bought back the old family property at Fleet Marston, and purchased the manor and advowson of Middle Claydon, on which he had advanced money. He did not, however, live there, but leased it for a hundred years to the Giffards, died in 1478, and was buried in the church of 'St. Martin's Pomary,' Iremonger Lane, 'between the quire and our Lady's Chapel'; but both church and tomb were destroyed by the great fire of 1666.

His will is in English. He bequeaths his 'soule vnto Allmyghty God in trinite, fadir, and sone, and holy gost, to the moost glorious virgyn, our lady saint Marie, modir to the i^{uo} person in trinite, our blissed Lord Crist Jesu my redemer and saviour.' After providing for his widow Enme, his daughters Dame Margaret Raleghe and Beatrice Danvers, and his two sons, he gives legacies for the 'reparacione' of the church of St. Martin: '100 marks to fynde an honest and convenable preest to syng for my soule, and the soules of my fadir and modir, my brothrene, my sustren, my children, and the soules of my speciall frendes Thomas Fauconere,' &c. To the 'oolde werks of the Cathedrall Chirche of saint Paule' he gives 'xxs.' He does not forget 'poure and neddy prisynors' in Newgate and Ludgate, the Marshalsea, King's Bench, and other prisons. For the 'reparacione' of the church at Fleet Marston, his country home, he gives 'cs.' There is a bequest for 'thamending of foule and ruynous weies about the citee of London, and nere aboute Aylesbury and Flete Morston.' To his twelve servants he gives liberally: 'xs to John Jakke, child of my kichen.' To his 'trewe lover,' John Brown, alderman of London, he bequeaths one of his 'cuppes covred of silver gilt.' Gifts for

'good dedes and werks of charite and pitee' are to be added 'to profite unto the helthe of my soule.'

His eldest son, Sir John, married the great-granddaughter of Sir Robert Whittingham, Sheriff of London in 1419, often confounded with Whittington of good cat memory. Sir Robert's son was 'Squier of household and servant' to King Henry VI., and his grandson, another Sir Robert, was a staunch Lancastrian, who held several important offices and stood by Queen Margaret during all the vicissitudes of the Wars of the Roses. He struck a good stroke for the Red Rose in the battle of Wakefield, but when, two months after that barren victory, Henry was deposed, a price of 100*l.* (equal to 1,500*l.* of our present money) was put on Sir Robert's head, as one of his most distinguished adherents. When Margaret, the only child of so loyal a Lancastrian and named after the Queen, married John, son of Sir Ralph Verney, an equally strong partisan of the house of York, there was probably much opposition in both families.

Sir Robert Whittingham was attainted of treason after the defeat of his party; all his possessions and lordships, his rights of fairs and markets, his houses and advowsons in London, &c., were forfeited, and Margaret was left penniless.

But again the tide turned. Sir Robert took the field for the Queen, while Sir Ralph was as strenuous as ever for Edward IV. in the City. The Yorkists soon regained their ascendancy, however, and at the battle of Tewkesbury Sir Robert died an honourable death. Sir Ralph was returned to Parliament, and, in consideration of his own faithful service, the lands of her father were restored to his son's wife Margaret. The King had, however, given them for life to Sir Thomas Montgomery, and to his brother the Duke of Gloucester (Richard III.), and for years the struggle with them went on unsuccessfully.

The battle of Bosworth changed everything, and Sir John Verney changed his tack also; he sank all mention of his father's services to the house of York, and brought prominently forward the sufferings and losses of his wife's

father in the service 'of the blessed Prince Henry VI.' He took possession of the different estates of his wife, and they lived a quiet secluded life at Penley Hall, which he rebuilt. Sir John Verney served as Sheriff for Bucks in 1494, and for Hertford and Essex, where he had property, in 1499, and was much occupied with a number of lawsuits entailed by the difficulties concerning his wife's land. Just before his death in 1505, aged only fifty-five, he renewed the lease of Claydon to the Giffards for eighty years, at a rental of 13*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, with the important exception of the great woods, which were leased soon after to Sir Harry Lee of Ditchley. Only once he is mentioned as joining in the Court ceremonials, when he was present at the coronation of Elizabeth of York. He was buried at the beautiful convent at Ashridge, near Penley, with his wife's relations, and four years after, at her particular wish, she was laid by the body of her husband. She had sold in 1501, during her husband's lifetime, the advowson of St. Stephen Walbrook, bought by the Whittinghams in 1432; the sale of livings is no new or Protestant custom.

In these early days when there are few or no letters, much can be learnt from the wills concerning family life. Dame Margaret Verney divides her lands, manors, lordships, and tenements among her three sons, but her 'horses, oxon, shepe, and other catell' at Salden go to her son John; to her daughter Dame Cecilia Chamberlaine and her husband 'on fader bed, on holster, on payre off blanketts, and a hanging for a chamber as shalbe thought convenient by my executor and broder sir Rauffe Verney; also I beqweeth to my doughter Anne Dame on kyrtyll off blake damuske, and on gowne of blake cloth, purfeld (bordered) with tawney velvet. . . . The resydew of all my goodds and catall, my detts and beqwests fully content,' she gives to Sir Ralph Verney, 'to dysposse for the well off my soule and all my frynds soulls as he shall thynke most expedient.' Among the 'certain detts' due from Dame Margaret Verney, 'wedewe late wyfe to sir John Verney knyght, the Lady

Colett claymeth xxxvj li : ' she was mother of Colet, Dean of St. Paul's.

The younger brother of Sir John, a second Sir Ralph, passed his life at Court. At the coronation of Elizabeth of York, in 1487, he rode as one of 'two esquires of honor, well-horsed, in gowns of crimson velvet, having mantles of ermine . . . on their heads hats of red cloth of gold, ermines, the beaks forward.' They came with the lord mayor, next before the Queen. Soon after Sir Ralph Verney married Eleanor Pole, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, and second cousin of Henry VII. Eleanor's brother, Sir Richard Pole, had married a cousin of the Queen's, so in right of her connection both with the Red Rose and the White, she seems to have had a considerable position in the royal household ; her salary of 20*l.* a year would more than equal 200*l.* now. An account exists of a year's expenses of the privy purse of Elizabeth of York, and during that time Lady Verney lends the Queen 'fifteen shillings suddenly,' and is repaid ; again she supplies '3*s.* 4*d.* as her Majesty's alms to a poor person,' the same to the ferryman at Datchet when the Queen crossed the Thames, twice as much to 'an old servant of her Majesty's father,' and 17*s.* on St. Peter's Eve, when there was always much jollification in the streets of London, bonfires, pageants, &c. ; 3*s.* 4*d.* to Robert Fyll, 'the king's painter,' and 10*s.* 'to John Reynolds,' another artist, for 'making of divers beasts and other pleasures for the Queen at Windsor.' Then comes 20*d.* to a man who brought a present of cherries to her Majesty, to 'Carvenelle for his costs, riding to the Princess [Catherine of Aragon], 5*s.*,' 'for making and lining a kirtle and other gear 2*s.*,' 'an offering at the altar of St. Frideswyde at Oxford on the Queen's progress into Wales in the summer of 1502, 20*d.*' The keep of the horse of Margaret Yone, a servant of the Queen's household apparently in attendance on Lady Verney, 4*d.* a day for 125 days, shows how all the ladies with their attendants went on horseback, as did the Queen herself on the 'summer progress,' which reads like a page out of the idyl 'Guinevere.'

When the Princess Margaret, Henry VII.'s daughter, was betrothed to James IV. of Scotland, and made her brilliant progress through England to join her husband, 'with the said Queen was deputed Sir Ralph Verney, her chamberlain, the which well and nobly exercised his office in the said voyage.' As Chief Commissioner appointed to look after Margaret's dowry, he was present at a meeting of the Scottish Parliament where King James's engagements were solemnly ratified.

On his return Sir Ralph was appointed to the same post in the household of the King's other daughter, the Princess Mary, and in 1514 was present at the high ceremonies of her betrothal to the aged King of France, Louis XII.; two of the other witnesses were Wolsey, not yet a cardinal, and Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, whom she married, in France, almost immediately after the King's death. John, the eldest son of Eleanor and Ralph, soon after married Dorothy, a ward of the Duke of Suffolk.¹

Meantime at Penley Sir John had been succeeded by his son the third Sir Ralph, who was Sheriff for Bucks and Beds in 1511 and 1524. A MS. in the Lambeth Library [No. 285] gives the names of Sir Rauffe Verney as one of twenty-three knights who went in the Queen's train to the Field of the Cloth of Gold; of Sir Rauf Verney the younger as one of thirty-four knights in attendance upon her; and of John Verney as 'Cupberer' in the Queen's chamber. A bas-relief of the meeting of the two kings is still in existence at Rouen, and shows the dress and appearance of the Queen's knights. It would be interesting to know whether Catherine of Aragon's connection with Steeple Claydon and her recent stay at Buckingham had to do with the appointment of the three Verneys about her person.

In the churchwardens' accounts of Wing, Bucks, is an inventory of church goods for June, 1528, in which we trace the pious use to which Sir Ralph evidently put some of his gorgeous trappings after his return:

¹ Her maiden name does not appear; she is mentioned as a widow in a deed of 1548 at Claydon.

'A borthor off clothe off goolde for the hey alter off the gyvyth off Syr Radulphe Werney.'¹

Sir Ralph was three times married; his first wife, Margaret Iwardby, brought him the manor of Quainton, where she lies buried: her brass is in Quainton Church, with the effigies of one son and three daughters. His second wife was Anne Weston; she and her brother Richard were in the household of Elizabeth of York at the same time as Eleanor Lady Verney. After the death of the Queen she became maid-of-honour to Catherine of Aragon, and later Queen Catherine gave her a marriage portion of 200 marks and the custody of the lands and person of John Danvers, a minor, always a lucrative charge. Sir Francis Weston, Lady Verney's nephew, was beheaded with Anne Bolcyn.

Sir Ralph was for the second time serving as Sheriff for Bucks and Beds in 1525, when his death occurred very suddenly; he made his will and died the same day. His estates comprised seven manors in the county of Bucks, and many elsewhere. His children were all under age; each daughter was to have 500 marks, but 'if anny of my foresaid daughters wolke not be advised nor ruled in the preferment of hir mariage, by my executours and supervisoures, it shall be at their liberty to mynyshe parte of the somme bequethid until she wil be refourmed.' His third wife, Elizabeth, widow of John Breton, was to have all his movable goods and a large jointure; his sons, the fourth Sir Ralph and Francis, take his 'manours and landes'; for the 'reparacion of the churche of Albury' he gives 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, and there is a curious bequest of the gowns of his second wife (and gowns were then magnificent garments, lasting more than one generation) 'to make vestiments [i.e. priests' robes] according to the discrecion of myn exccutours. . . . Myn uncle Sir Raaf Verney thelder knight' is to have 'my blacke gowne of satten, furrid with marternes'; while his cousin John is to have his 'gowne

¹ Alfred H. Cocks, Esq., of Poynetts, Skirmett near Henley, kindly sent me this information.

² Elizabeth Inwardby, her sister, was ancestress of Thomas Elmes, p. 423.

of tawny velvit, fore parte lind with damaske.' The robe of a man of a certain age was a sort of dressing-gown at home, as distinguished from his armour and riding-gear when he went abroad. 'My cowsen Paule Darrell, who is 'debutye and under-sherif,' is to have an annuity of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for keeping the courts and receiving the rents of the testator. 'Item, that Richard Verney my servaunte have the house and lande he dwellith in during his life naturall, for keping of my woddes in Claydon; . . . also that Richard Verney's wife have a cowe. Also, that my servauntes have deliverid to them every man his hole yeres wages. Also, that parte of them have certaine of my gildinges geven them at the discrecion of myne executours, and to each a blacke gowne.' As a sort of afterthought comes twenty shillings to 'Sir Thomas, chauntry preest of Albery, to pray for my soule.' He has begun his will 'in the name of God, our blissid Lady, and all the holly company of heven': there is no trace as yet of the Reformation.

His courtier uncle, who had been rewarded for his services to the late King and Queen with a valuable manor given by Henry VIII., died soon after. He was buried at King's Langley in 1528, in a splendid altar-tomb with coats of arms of the Verneys and Poles, which also ornament the surcoat of the 'recumbent figure of the knight and are reversed on the magnificent mantle of the lady.'

The fourth Sir Ralph was only fifteen when he inherited his father's large property; he married when he was nineteen, and took up his abode at Penley. Soon after we hear of a dispute concerning the estate at Claydon, with his tenant, Sir George Giffard. The house and church had been suffered to fall into ruinous decay, and Giffard at last agreed to pay 200 marks and to repair both, if Sir Ralph would renew his lease for 100 years instead of eighty, 'to which Verney said he would not doe it for nothing.' So Giffard said he would give him a hunting-horse which he valued at 30*l.* (probably an exceedingly fine one, for the sum is now equivalent to 300*l.* or more), 'so Verney consented to it.' The church was repaired and the house rebuilt, 'but the Verneys paid

dear for the hunter,' Lord Fermanagh adds significantly. The new lease is dated 1535.

Sir Ralph's marriage was supposed to be an excellent one, to Elizabeth, one of the six heiress daughters of Lord Braye, inheritor of the estates of Sir Reginald Braye; he was said to have found the crown in a bush after the battle of Bosworth, and to have set it on 'Richmond's' head. For some time there was no male heir to the great Braye estates, but at last a boy was born to Lady Braye—'a youth of great promise, a paragon in court, and of sweet entertainment.'

Sir Ralph seems to have been in bad health, and to have lived, like his grandfather, a secluded life at Penley. In 1537, however, we find him specially noted as one of the gentlemen present at the christening of Edward VI.; and in 1539 he was appointed to help in receiving Anne of Cleves. In 1543 he was sent by Henry VIII. with the army which inflicted terrible ravages upon Scotland. It was considered a hazardous expedition, and he made his will before starting; shortly after his return, ill and perhaps wounded, he died, aged only thirty-seven years, and was buried with his ancestors at Ashridge. His will shows the progress of the Reformation; there is no mention of our lady St. Mary; he 'beqweths his soul to Almighty God, his Saviour and Redeemer,' but he must have thought it would do no harm to add 'I wyll that oon honest prist shall synge for the sowlles of me, my father and mother, of Rauff Verney, etc., etc., etc., and of all Crystens'; this, however, is only to go on 'for oon holl year.' The priest has a 'stypend of syx pounds sterlyng, and is to fynd himself wyne and waye to celebrate withal, and to say every Wednysday and Fryday diriche and commendacions for the sowlles aforesaid.' The value of Sir Ralph's manors and lands is called 330*l.* a year to be multiplied by about ten for the modern value.

The marriage portions of his daughters are fixed at 400 marks each, and if they are obstinate and wilful, or behave in any way improperly (the clause is very crudely expressed), their portions are to be 'rated and apporcioned' by their mother. Lands are left to the six younger sons of

the value of 10*l.* a year each; and a bequest to his heir of a flock of 500 ewes, or an equivalent of threescore pounds in ready money (about 2*s.* 4½*l.* apiece), gives a certain standard of value. The size of the sheep in 1546 was, however, very small. Soon after there is a mention of 3 lb. of beef for a penny.

Sir Ralph left seven young children, and makes an earnest appeal to the 'overseers' of his will to 'maintain them in erudition and learning, and advance their welfare by good marriages and other promotion'; liberal legacies are left to his servants, and fourpence to each of his godchildren 'if they require it.' His death was a great loss to his family, for his wife married again and again—four times in all—and had other matters on hand than the care of her first husband's children. Three elder sons died young.

Five sons and two daughters were left to their own guidance, the eldest, Edmund, being only eighteen years old; he soon after married Dorothy Peckham, daughter of a Bucks squire, cofferer to Henry VIII. and subsequently one of the Council appointed to assist his 'executours.' He was afterwards executor to Anne of Cleves, who left him 'a jugge of gold with a cover, or a crystal glass garnyshe with gold and sett with stones.' Dorothy Verney died in 1547, and was buried at Bittlesden Abbey, the brass to her memory showing a label coming out of her mouth with 'Sancta Trinitas Unus Deus Miserere Nobis,' with her name and the words 'Jesu have mercy' below.

Sir Edmund was chosen knight of the shire a few years after he came of age, and sat with his brother Francis, who represented the borough of Buckingham. The times were difficult; the sudden changes in religion and politics, as the different monarchs succeeded each other, must have been perplexing in the extreme. When a plot was brewing for transferring the crown to the Princess Elizabeth, it was among the younger members of Parliament that the Government looked for men likely to have joined in 'Dudley's Conspiracy.' Edmund Verney was arrested with his brother Francis and his brother-in-law Henry Peckham. Sir Anthony

Kingston, 'head of the late contemptuous behaviour of the Commons'; Throgmorton, a Bucks squire, and some others were also taken. Several were put to the torture, others threatened with it, and all confessed excepting Throgmorton. The Verneys were not charged with treason, but for having 'given in their adhesion.' Edmund received his pardon—now in the muniment room at Claydon, dated July 1556—under the great seal of Philip and Mary. Francis Verney was tried and found guilty, but his punishment was afterwards remitted; it was given in evidence that he and Peckham had plighted their troth in a way still practised in the north. Peckham took a 'demi-sovereign and broke it in two parts, one part thereof he traitorously delivered to Francis for an undoubted sign of their common consent to perform the said treason, and so the death and final destruction of their supreme lady the Queen and subversion of the Kingdom of England imagined and compassed'; the inversion of the sentences, the verb coming at the end, is curiously like the German construction.

The young uncle of the Verneys, Lord Braye, did not get off so easily as they did; he was imprisoned in the Tower, and though his friends were allowed to relieve him with meat and drink, little of it seems to have reached him, and he was in a pitiable state. His poor wife, with whom he had quarrelled, but who had returned to help him in his trouble, was treated with no gentleness in her efforts to assist him. The Queen would not receive her or old Lady Braye, having shut herself up, 'sad and heavy,' for two months at the news that Philip, whom she was expecting, had put off his coming. But when Mary heard that the forsaken wife had come to intercede for her husband, she 'gave her great praise and said God sent oftymes to good women evil husbands.' One of the principal accusations against Lord Braye was that he had said 'yf my neighbour at Hatfield might once reign,' meaning the Lady Elizabeth, 'he shold have his landes and debtes given him again, which he bothe wished and trusted to see.' The violent jealousy of the Queen against her sister made this

a very sore point; after twelve months' imprisonment, however, he obtained his liberty. Parliament was about to meet, and Mary may have been glad to release the prisoners. Lord Braye went abroad, distinguished himself at the battle of St. Quentin on Mary's behalf, and came home to die in 1557, aged only thirty, and childless. He had a splendid funeral. Edmund Verney—his nephew, although of the same age—was one of the chief mourners, and placed the 'mass penny' and his coat of arms on the altar; after which a Black Friar preached a sermon, showing 'how Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, seeing how he was a gentleman given to chivalry for the wealth of his country, and so,' he said, 'was that nobleman which there lay dead,' which was not exactly relevant.

By the death of her brother, Edmund Verney's mother became once more a co-heiress of the Brayes; there was no estate remaining, but the title was revived in favour of one of her descendants in the female line, Sarah Otway Cave, Baroness Braye, in 1839. Edmund Verney died in 1558, having witnessed the accession of Elizabeth (for which he had risked so much), and the triumph of Protestantism; he left no will, but had settled his land on his brothers, and was succeeded by one of them, another Edmund, a name which, with that of Ralph, is found henceforward in every generation of Verneys. Edmund, aged twenty-three, took up his abode at Penley, served as Sheriff twice for Herts and once for Bucks, and was very active in the public business of both counties during the reign of Elizabeth. At the time of the Spanish Armada he was appointed one of five captains who were to command the musters of the county; he was bound to bring in 300 men for the defence of the kingdom, and his contribution in money was large—50*l*. He married three widows in succession: (1) Frances Hastings, widow of Thomas Redmayne of North Marston; (2) Awdreye, daughter of William Gardner, widow of Sir Peter Carew, by whom he had one son, Francis; (3) Mary, daughter of John Blakeney of Sparham, co. Norfolk, who was also marrying for the third time. By her first husband,

Geoffrey Turville of New Park Hall, co. Leicester, she had a daughter married to Sir John Leeke, and probably sons. Her second husband, William St. Barbe, belonged to Broadlands¹ in Hants (afterwards Lord Palmerston's home): she had by him one daughter, Ursula, who when about twelve years old was married, with Sir Edmund's consent, to his son Francis Verney, aged fourteen. Sir Edmund and Dame Mary occupied a house in Drury Lane which belonged to her, where a boy Edmund was born, afterwards the Standard Bearer to Charles I. The last years of Sir Edmund the elder were spent on his different estates; he arranged to divide his property equally between his two sons, four manors to each. His widow was to have the rents of Claydon until Edmund came of age. Sir Edmund only succeeded in effecting this by means of a private Act of Parliament, Elizabeth xxxix.; and soon after, in 1599, he died at Chalfont St. Giles, in 'the Stone House,' which was afterwards sold to the Hampdens. His funeral was a very grand one, performed more than a month after his death, with 'great pompt of streamers, heralds, &c.'; he was buried in the beautiful little Verney Chapel, within a handsome stone screen, in the ancient church of Albury.

Sir Edmund obtained a licence from the Archbishop in 1581, confirmed by letters patent under the great seal, permitting him 'to eat flesh on days forbidden with a good conscience for the term of his life, because that the eating of fish was injurious to his health by reason of the great weakness of his stomach.' This luxury of permissions shows how strictly fasts were enforced to the end of the century. Sir Edmund's portrait, in the ruff and doublet of Elizabeth's day and a heavy gold chain, is at Claydon; his widow, known to three generations as 'ould Lady Verney,' survived him more than forty years.

¹ Broadlands belonged to the St. Barbes for many generations, till they were ruined by the South Sea Bubble, and sold the property to Lord Palmerston's great-grandfather. St. Barbe monuments are in Romsey Abbey.



SIR EDMUND VERNEY, KT., THE ELDER

CHAPTER IV.

THE HALF-BROTHERS, SIR FRANCIS AND SIR EDMUND VERNEY.

1600-1638.

SIR FRANCIS VERNEY, eldest son of Sir Edmund, was only sixteen when his father died; he had lost his mother when he was but five years old, and seems never to have been under any control either from affection or education. His name appears in the Bursar's accounts of Trinity College, Oxford: he matriculated September 19, 1600, aged fifteen. In 1604, when not above twenty, he was living in St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, in the neighbourhood of Alsatia, when one of his servants, Richard Gygges, was slain, apparently in a drunken brawl, such as often disturbed that very unsavoury region. He quarrelled with his stepmother at the earliest possible moment after he came of age; his brother was too young to have aggrieved him, but he petitioned Parliament to set aside the settlement made by his father of part of his estates on Edmund and of Lady Verney's jointure, which the Act of Elizabeth's reign had confirmed. A Bill for this object was brought in, and Randal Crewe (the celebrated patriot Chief Justice) pleaded before the House on behalf of Sir Edmund's widow. Several members who had sat on the Committee to which the former Bill had been referred gave evidence that 'Sir Edmund Verney the elder did follow the Bill himself, and laboured divers friends in it, and the repeal would overthrow many purchasers, sixty at least.' After 'much dispute and argument' the Bill was rejected. Sir Francis had claimed as eldest son under a former

settlement by his uncle Edmund, which had been annulled in the Elizabethan Act, and his claim had a certain appearance of equity. This was probably urged on his stepmother, for she resigned her dower house at Quainton to him in 1606. The young man was, however, stung to desperation; the dissensions and heart-burnings with his family, the keen sense of what he thought injustice, and the debts with which he was overwhelmed, at last determined him to sell everything and 'forsake the friends who had injured him, and the country which had refused him redress.'

Quainton was sold first; it consisted of about 800 acres with the advowson, and brought only 500*l*. Fleet Marston, where his ancestors had lived, went next; Penley, where his father died, followed, and the furniture was sold with it, as if to show that the break-up was final.

He then made a journey to the Holy Land; a letter exists from George Carew, English ambassador at Paris, 'to my very good Lord the Earle of Salisbury, principal Secretary of Estate at Court,' telling how 'the bearer hereof, Sir Francis Verney, since his retourne hither from Jherusalem, hath frequented the exercises of our religion at my house, which hath the rather moved me to give him this commendation to your Lordshippe, &c., &c.' Lord Fermanagh notes that 'this Francis was a great traveller and fought severall Duellos.'

He was in England for some time in the summer and autumn of 1608, when he disposed of other estates, gave a general irrevocable authority to his uncle, Urian Verney, to act for him in all that concerned the wreck of his property, and assigned his title deeds to another uncle, Ralph, described as 'of High Holborn, gentleman,' and then disappeared from all knowledge of his friends. His wife is not mentioned at this period, but as she was the daughter of his stepmother, and he had been married to her when only a boy, she was probably mixed up in his mind with the rest of his 'enemies.'

Rumour and tradition declare that he went to Barbary,

where it is reported that he 'turned Turk,' but this part of the story perhaps may be understood politically, not religiously (or irreligious). A war of succession was going on in Morocco between the three sons of the Emperor Muley Hamet, who had lately died. One of these, Muley Sidan, obtained the services of a body of Englishmen, who were highly paid and well treated. They were under the command of Captain John Giffard, a connection of the Verneys, and Sir Francis probably joined them for a time.

It was an age of lawless adventure both by sea and land; during the war with Spain, English cruisers were employed as privateers with commissions from the Queen herself. Sir Walter Raleigh's exploits were often little better than piracy, and the adventures of Elizabeth's famous Devonshire captains hovered perilously near to buccaneering. It is clear that Sir Francis was in command of one of these ships and was the terror of even English merchant vessels, for in 1609 Cottington, attached to the embassy in Spain, writes word that 'Verney had taken three or four Poole ships and one of Plymouth.' Another of the Giffards was captain of the 'Fortune,' a buccaneering vessel, and the proceeds of successful piracy were such that it is said 'no English nobleman kept such state as Captain John Ward, who is called their chief, with whom were associated Sir Francis Verney, Granvile, and others.' In vain did King James endeavour to put them down.

His reckless career went on for three or four more years of which we have no notice, till in 'the most delectable and true discours of an admirid and painful peregrination by William Lithgow,' published in 1623, we come on him once again. 'Here in Missina (in 1615) I found the sometime great English gallant, Sir Francis Verney, lying sick in a Hospital, whom six weeks before I had met at P'alermo, who after many misfortunes, exhausting his large patrimony, abandoning his country and turning Turk in Tunis, was taken at sea by the Sicilian galleys, in one of which he was two years a slave, whence he was redeemed by an English Jesuit upon a promise of conversion to the Christian faith.

Aug 25,
1615.

When set at liberty he turned common soldier, and here in the extremest calamity of extream miseries entreated death. Whose dead corps I charitably interred in the best manner time would afford me strength.' The chief authority of the great Hospital of St. Mary of Pity, Don Peter Garsia, 'pater magni Xenodochei,' certifies only that Sir Francis Verney, 'Anglum,' came to hospital sick, and that they took him in. Also that on September 6, 1615, he died there. This certificate was obtained for his family in England by John Watchin, an English merchant, and with it he sent home a turban, two fine silk pelisses, two pairs of slippers, the cane, and a curious pilgrim's staff inlaid with mother-of-pearl crosses, belonging to Sir Francis, all still preserved; the last 'seems to show that he did not commit the unnecessary and improbable offence of becoming a renegade,' and also that he was not quite in such 'extream' poverty as Lithgow represents when he performed his 'pious offices.' A sadder story cannot be imagined; that in his misery he should never have applied for help to any of his friends at home—neither to his wife, the uncles in whom he trusted, nor to the brother who was too young when they parted to have had any real quarrel with, and who was now old enough to assist him—shows how desperate he must have considered his condition in the eyes of his country, and was probably also due to the wayward pride which had ruined his fair career in England. 'There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends, and fame,' ended poor Francis, aged only thirty one.

1619.

His widow, Ursula, married the son of Sir W. Clark, 'without his father's privity. . . . Though there be no great inequality between them, either for wealth or years (he being four or five and forty, and she two or three and thirty), yet the old knight is so much offended that he threatens to disinherit him, and hath vowed they shall never come within his doors.' Parental authority was severe at that period and exercised unsparingly. Mr. Clark died in 1655, and Ursula Lady Verney was married a third time to John Chichely, Esq.; she survived till 1668.



SIR FRANCIS VERNEY, KT.

There is an extremely fine portrait of Sir Francis at Claydon. It is the beau ideal of a gallant gentleman of the time: his tawny silk Spanish jerkin and trunk hose slashed and lined with dull red, his large loose boots of yellow Cordovan leather and gilt spurs, his embroidered gauntlet gloves and the plume of many-coloured ostrich feathers in the hat that lies on the table beside him, are all in the best taste of the best fashion of the period. He is immensely tall, and carries his fine clothes with the grace and dignity of a thorough gentleman; his face is handsome, with a small pointed beard, and set in a little quilted ruff which is very becoming. In his hand is a gilt cane, the two ends painted black, the original of which hangs under the picture. The expression is full of spirit and intelligence, without a trace in it of the desperate, wild manner of man which he afterwards became; and it makes one the more regret the sad fate of one evidently born for better things in life than to command a crew of Algerine desperadoes.

The career of Sir Edmund Verney, who was now the head of the family, was in every respect, save that of courage, the greatest possible contrast to that of poor Francis—a high-minded, conscientious, chivalrous man, a most affectionate father and husband, devoted to his duties, ‘both public and private, both of peace and war.’ After his father’s death he lived in Drury Lane with his mother, who had no home in the country for some time after she had given up her house at Quainton to Francis. ‘Danie Mary’ received the rents of Claydon and Mursley during her son’s minority for the purposes of his education, which was provided in the form then considered most becoming for a young man intended for the army and the Court. ‘After some time spent with my Lord Goring to see the armies in the wars in the Low Countries, he made some sallies out with my Lord Herbert and Sir Henry Wotton to see the Courts of France and Italy.’ On his return in 1610, ‘an accomplished gentleman,’ he was taken into the household of Prince Henry as chief sewer where his Uncle Francis was one of the falconers and Mr. Bruce remarks that it was evidently an additional

recommendation to the prince, that he found sympathy in Sir Edmund's religious principles, then beginning to be called Puritanism.

In January 1611, he was knighted when just of age, and in the same year he visited Madrid, where Sir John Digby was then the ambassador, apparently on some public business. It must have been shortly after his return to England that Prince Henry gave him his picture; he died in 1612, not yet nineteen; Sir Edmund felt his loss acutely, and twenty-seven years after alluded to it as having occasioned him the greatest sorrow of any he had ever known.

In the next year a household was formed for Prince Charles, aged thirteen, and Sir Edmund was placed in it as one of the gentlemen of the privy chamber. He was barely twenty-three himself, and in later and more difficult years the fact that they had been together almost from boyhood singularly complicated the feeling with which Sir Edmund regarded the proceedings of his master, while Charles after his rather cold fashion seems to have respected and liked the chivalrous and warm-hearted gentleman — 'A man,' says Clarendon, 'of great courage and of a very cheerful and generous nature and confessedly valiant,' who served his king faithfully, but with the same sort of misgiving that beset Falkland and so many other loyal gentlemen who looked ahead and saw the danger of the course which their ill-fated master pursued with obstinate blindness to the bitter end.

In the interval before his second appointment, Sir Edmund, aged twenty-two, married the daughter of a neighbouring proprietor 'of birth and estate,' Sir Thomas Denton, whose ancient house at Hillesden, with a large and beautiful old church close by, and an elm avenue leading to it along the crest of the hill, could be seen from the higher part of the Claydon estate. In later years 'two black trumpeters in red used to sound a reveille, answered by two trumpeters from the other hill,' says an unwritten tradition.

Margaret Denton was one of a very numerous family, but she had what must have been considered a good fortune

—2,300*l.*—equal to four or five times the sum at present. The question of settlements was therefore serious. Dame Mary was a managing woman and at this time she did her best for her son. Sir Thomas demanded a jointure of 400*l.* a year, which Sir Edmund at that time was unable to secure. His mother, however, gave up a recognisance for 1,000*l.*, upon receiving an annuity of 100*l.* a year, and the marriage took place in December 1612. Margaret Verney was a good and clever woman, devoted to her husband and children, gentle and retiring; ‘the heart of her husband trusted in her,’ and obliged as he was to be very often away from home in attendance at Court, she transacted much of the business of the family.

There is an interesting picture of her, with a tender sad face full of feeling and intelligence, in an undress white ‘smock’ trimmed with lace, and a large ‘jewel’ hung round her neck: she is leaning on her left arm, held so as to show the marks of a burn, with which there is evidently some honourable story connected, but which has been vainly sought for. She was much attached to her own family, the Dentons, whose portraits still hang with her own at Claydon.

Margaret was only eighteen, Claydon was still let to the Giffards, and it must have been a material and pleasant help to the young couple when the Dentons agreed to give their daughter and her husband ‘four yeares boarde.’ Sir Edmund seems to have oscillated between the house in Drury Lane, his chamber at Prince Charles’s Court, and Hillesden, where his wife chiefly lived and where eight of their twelve children were born, the four eldest being boys, Ralph, Thomas, Edmund, and Henry. The Dentons were among the chief people in the county of Bucks, one or other of them serving in Parliament for Buckingham or the county for a couple of hundred years, and Sir Edmund took part as a magistrate in all the county business, together with his father-in-law, his wife’s uncle, Sir Peter Temple, Sir W. Fleetwood, the father of Cromwell’s son-in-law, &c. In 1622 he was appointed Lieutenant of Whaddon Chase by Villiers, then Marquis of Buckingham (who had been made

its keeper by James I. and occasionally resided at the manor house), with leave to kill what he would in the park and chase. There is a curious petition three years later from a number of cottagers at Little Horwood, only able to sign their mark, 'to the wor^{pp}ful Sir Edward Varney Kt.' They ask for help against Villiers, now Duke of Buckingham, and speak out in a fearless way creditable to both Sir Edmund and themselves 'about your deere lying in o' corn and grasse, and . . . certefie that it is most t^{ue} that the deere doe much oppresse us in most places of o' feeld. . . . We have ancientlie used to cutte and fetch furzes from offe o' sheep-co^mon for o' own uses. But now of late we have been forbidden and discharged as from you. We hope o' gracious Lord will suffer us to enjoy o' ancient rights and therefore we desire that you would not goe about to take them from us.'

The estate at Claydon had all this time been a source of great annoyance to Sir Edmund. It had been sublet to Mr. Martin Lister, who cut the timber, ploughed up the pastures (a great crime in Buckinghamshire, where they are exceptionally good), and made himself otherwise disagreeable. The lease, which had been renewed to the Giffards for 100 years in 1535, had still fifteen years to run. Sir Edmund in 1620, to put an end to the continual disputes, agreed to pay 4,000*l.* for the surrender of the remainder of the lease. If he had had the money it would have been an excellent investment, but as he had to borrow it he was only involving himself in more serious trouble. He had been at great charge in the service of 'the late most renowned Prince Henry and my ever most honoured and famous Prince Charles, my loving master, and it pleased his highness to promise to pay unto mee 4,000*l.*, by a thousand pounds yearely for fower yeares. According to his princely woord and promis he hath paid unto me one thousand pounds of the same, and the said most worthy prince hath ever been so just of his word and promise that he will no doubt give order for payment thereof.' 'The princely woord and promis' never led to the money being paid, and Sir

Edmund continued in more or less pecuniary difficulties to the end of his life.

The year 1623 was memorable for the strange and foolish episode of the journey of Charles to Spain in search of the Infanta. The prince's household was sent after him by sea, sixty in number, among whom was Sir Edmund Verney. In about six days they reached Santander, 'a very poor thing, having neither glass windows, nor chimneys,' says Sir Richard Wynne of Gwydyr, one of the party. After a week without orders they started for Madrid, and were then told to return to England by the ships they came in. Most of them resolved to obey the order, but Sir Edmund Verney, Sir William Howard, and a few of the most determined, declared that the prince might be under duress, and that they would go on and see for themselves.

When the suite at length reached the king's palace at Madrid where the prince was lodged, he had only two little rooms, 'with a garden so nasty and so ill-favourably kept, that a farmer in England would be ashamed of such another; in this he must walk or mew himself up all day long.' Howard and Verney were in attendance; the others who had followed, after many delays and counter-orders, were lodged in the Duke de Monteleo's palace, a long way off, and had nothing to do but play at cards. The dirt in the streets and houses 'did almost poison us.' The general want of civilisation in Spain, which was then considered the first country in the world, compared to what they were used to in England, is remarkable.

Most of the suite were sent home after this, some by sea, some by land, with scant regard for their convenience; Sir Edmund, however, remained with the prince. Although Charles had arrived at Madrid in March it was not until October 3 that he made up his mind to depart, wearied by the delays and deccits of all concerned.

During these long months the chief knowledge we have of Sir Edmund's doings is from Howell's letters, which mention that 'the Prince his page Mr. Washington, is lately dead of a calenture. A little before his death one Ballard,

an English priest, went to tamper with him, and Sir Edmund Verney meeting him coming down the stairs out of Washington's chamber, they fell from words to blowes, but they were parted. The business was like to gather very ill-blood, com to a great height, had not Gondomar quash't it.' The little company of Englishmen were terribly excited; gathering in a knot about the door they barred the entrance, as they said by the prince's orders, and Sir Edmund struck the priest in the face with his fist. His strong feeling against Catholicism was stimulated by his interest in his compatriot, as the poor boy was from Buckinghamshire. It must have been with a feeling of relief at having at least saved his friend from further molestation, that he, with all the English company, attended Washington's burial 'under a fig-tree in my Lord of Bristol's garden,' the only resting-place allowed him by the bigotry of the Spaniards.

The King, much annoyed, sent Gondomar to desire that Sir Edmund should be rigorously punished; on the other hand, Charles, deeply offended, demanded that an Alcalde, who had laid hands upon his servant, should suffer. At last Philip cut the matter short by telling the prince that if he wished to spend the winter in Madrid he must dismiss his Protestant attendants. This was probably one of the smaller affronts which at last determined the wavering resolution of Charles to leave Madrid. Sir Edmund was not sent away, and twelve days after Charles himself took his departure.

It is mentioned how at the last moment, when the prince was scattering presents on all sides, he found that his stock had run short, and he bought 'a cross of ten thick table diamonds from his servant Sir Edmund Verney as a gift to Don Maria de Lande.' This was probably one of the jewels belonging to his great-grandmother, the splendid maid of honour, Anne Weston, which he had taken with him into Spain.

A picture of Sir Edmund, marked at the back 'Done in Spain, very unlike,' represents him as a smart young gentleman with a ring in his ear, a pointed beard, an exceedingly rich lace collar and ruffles, and a crimson sash over his



SIR EDMUND VERNEY, KT., KNIGHT-MARSHAL

breastplate, curiously unlike the serious, statesmanlike, soldierly look of the picture of him by Vandyke painted in later years.

The prince and his attendants went home by sea; Sir Edmund hurried off to Buckinghamshire, where a little daughter Margaret had been born to him at Hillesden during the anxious time which the poor mother had passed on his account, for the season was a stormy one, and the voyage across the Bay of Biscay protracted and dangerous. In 1624 Sir Edmund was returned for the borough of Buckingham in the last Parliament of King James, who died the following year. Sir Edmund had seen the world and was a man used to business; he took his turn on Committees, but does not appear to have joined in the debates.

The accession of the new King brought with it an improvement in Sir Edmund's position. He was made Knight-Marshal of the Palace, a very ancient office which had been held by such men as Baron Hunsdon and Sir Ralph Hopton. It was a troublesome post, and the duty of preserving order was no easy task. During the reign of James the Court had been beset by a 'crowd of idle rascals and poor miserable bodics' from Scotland, against whom the King issued many vain proclamations. 'A multitude of idle and masterless persons' kept the place in an uproar with their quarrels, and the danger of infection was not slight in such gatherings at that very insanitary period. A kind of market was held at the Court gate, where the 'beefs, muttons, veales, chickens,' &c., were bought, which had of old been supplied to the sovereign at certain low prices with or without the consent of the owner. The precincts of the palace must have been a scene of confusion, noise, dirt and squalor, such as we can hardly conceive as surrounding a Court. The state officers and the Royal tradespeople lived in the palace, with a number of workmen and hangers on; while innumerable petitioners, and beggars of all classes and descriptions stood about trying to obtain notice.

Many papers concerning the redress of these grievances are to be found at Claydon—one wherein the King gave

orders that 'the Knight Marshal shall continually ride both in the daytime and in the night about our Court,' arresting and punishing the offenders 'fortunately he was allowed a deputy and from four to six officers or vergers, which relieved him of many of these very distasteful duties. 'The great and excessive number of landers and landresses that follow our court, without order or limitation,' next oppresses the royal mind. 'Wee, intending the reformation thereof, doe hereby lymitt and apoint' such a number 'of good reputation, not to over burden our court with vagabonds. . . . Wee allow for our bodie, one landres, 2 maides; the same for y^e Lord Admiral, y^e Lord Chamberlain &c. Millayners 1, glovers 1, &c.'

In 1625 Charles changed a pension of 200*l.* during pleasure, which he had previously given to Sir Edmund, 'considering his many faithful and acceptable services,' into one for life, and added another of the same amount to him as part of the emoluments of the Knight-Marshal, who seems to have otherwise been paid by the fees of his court, which 'took cognizance of all causes arising in the King's household, or within the verge.'

The Verney papers during 1625 and 1626 are full of orders for the levying of money upon privy seals, and for 'coat and conduct money,' for the outfit of men pressed for an expedition to Cadiz against Spain, and for their expenses in going to the place of rendezvous.

As soon as the Buckinghamshire proportion of the subsidy—3,052*l.*—had been assessed, a demand was made for an additional loan of half the amount. A letter from the Duke of Buckingham to Sir Edmund adds a direction to him and the other deputy-lieutenants of Bucks to 'disarm the Roman Catholiques,' who were at this time in bad odour, in consequence of the favour they were believed to receive at Court, and the Queen's vehement partisanship: this order was apparently a wretched attempt to obtain popularity at their expense. The duty seems, however, to have been regarded as a very unpalatable one, and in a letter from Sir Thomas Tyringham to 'Sir Thomas Deynton

[Denton] at Hilsden,' he mentions that magistrates feared 'being lawffed at' for their pains. There is a curious item in a letter from Sir W. Borlace to Sir Thomas Denton in January 1626: 'I do think Mr. John Hampden to be £13. 6. 8 and his mother £10 is a harder rate then I finde upon any other.' The protest was unattended to at the time, but the point appears to have been yielded, for in the official list Hampden is set down at ten pounds, though his mother's tax continued as before. The deputy-lieutenants of the county of Bucks sent up a very earnest remonstrance to the Duke of Buckingham as to the grievances of the county.

For the two Parliaments of 1625 and 1626 Sir Edmund did not stand, but in that summoned in 1627-8 he was returned for Aylesbury. It lasted barely a year, but the work done was more important for the liberties of England than at any other period, except perhaps during the first years of the Long Parliament, and it was performed at a much greater risk to the members themselves. Sir Edmund's sympathies were with Eliot and Hampden, and he was shortly after the chief mover in bringing over Archbishop Usher from Ireland to preach 'right doctrine' at St. Paul's Church in Covent Garden. Out of his scanty income he subscribed most liberally to the fund required, and received the archbishop into his house.

That he did show a very uncourtly sympathy with at least the religious side of the patriot opposition, and risked unpopularity with the King, is evident from a hint in a letter about this time of Sir John Leeke's, who questions whether he has any power left of helping a friend.

Though somewhat out of favour, Sir Edmund belonged to the class of powerful country gentlemen, whose influence was great, and whom it was important to conciliate, and Charles seems to have felt that the presence in Parliament of one so respected and so independent, who yet had a strong personal feeling for his sovereign, was a help to his cause.

The number of gentlemen out of Buckinghamshire who

distinguished themselves at this time in the struggle for the liberties of England is indeed very remarkable, and may well make those who dwell there proud of their county. Beginning with Sir Miles Hobart, M.P. for Marlow, imprisoned in 1629 in the Tower for his conduct in the last Parliament; Sir Edward Coke, M.P. for the county, who had been the legal adviser of the constitutional resistance of so many years, and who lived at Stoke Pogis near Slough; we have also Sir Peter Temple, uncle of Lady Verney, who 'was kept a prisoner in his own house at Stowe, to answer for arrears of ship money,' which he refused to pay; Whitelocke; Fortescue of Salden; Ralph Verney, the writer of the 'Notes of the Long Parliament'; and last and greatest of all, Hampden, the chief gentleman of England at that period (whose old house on the Chilterns was some 20 miles from Claydon), with many others of inferior note, but all taking the same line. The 5,000 freeholders who rode up to London for the protection of Parliament in 1641 were following a path wherein the gentlemen of the county had long been leading the way.

The prominent interest in religious over political questions, even the most absorbing, is extremely remarkable both in Sir Edmund and Sir Ralph: it was not only that the liberties of England at this time were believed by them to hang as much on one as on the other, but that being men of the world, living the ordinary life, at Court, in Parliament, in business, in war, sharing in the pleasures and the occupations of other men, whether in town or country, they were among those (and there were many) who truly cared to carry out their ideal of a higher life, though without the smallest pretence at sanctity over and above their neighbours. Mr. Green mentions how different was the Puritan gentleman of this period from the stern fanatics who bore the name a few years later. Men of the stamp of Colonel Hutchinson could not be distinguished from such royalists as Lord Falkland in their dress and manners; Sir Ralph's hair in Cornelius Jansen's picture falls to his neck; Sir Edmund's is as long in his picture by Vandyke: it was not

by such signs that their faith was signified. The deep interest in religion as more important than any mere earthly concerns, the purity of life and respect for women which was part of their creed—(so that ‘home,’ as we conceive it, was the creation of the Puritans as contrasted with the larger geniality of the age that was passing away)—are all strikingly illustrated in Sir Edmund and his sons, Ralph and Edmund. Their pleasure in ‘jest and youthful jollity,’ wit and mirth and innocent enjoyments such as dancing, music, fencing, hawking, and ‘in all liberal arts,’ was entirely without the grossness which degraded the following reign, or the rigidity and narrowness of the time of the Commonwealth: their wives were as high-minded and pure-hearted as themselves. Sir Edmund, too, as is said of Colonel Hutchinson, ‘had a loving and sweet courtesy to the poorest,’ which was already felt to be part of the demeanour of English gentlemen. His care for the people at Claydon comes out in his orders, which are wise and considerate. Writing to his steward, Will. Roades, about his father, he says, ‘He hath sent to mee about that ashwood. The poore old man offers to pay for it; tell him I cannot wright to him now, but that I have sent to you to lett him have that wood or any other wood to keepe him from coulde.’ A shed has tumbled down in a great storm; ‘I am glad my hovell fell upon noe Christian creature,’ writes Sir Edmund, and in his anxiety to ascertain that neither man nor beast has suffered by the accident he quite omits inquiries concerning the money lost. The letters he receives show the pains he takes in favour of the huntsman who has left him, and the servants for whom he desires places. His cottagers, his farmers, are all spoken of with a degree of good will and friendly interest which proves the kindly intercourse existing between him and his dependants and neighbours. Indeed, the traces of his good deeds, and the help which he rendered to small and great in the midst of the business which overwhelmed him, abound in the letters. Sometimes it is a ‘Buck from Whaddon Chase,’ which Sir Kenelm Digby requests, in a large bold hand covering a foolscap

sheet of paper; sometimes it is the future of his young niece, Doll Leeke, whom he has taken to live at Claydon, or the interests of some poor old lady in London about which he is concerned. Lord Middlesex writes to him to get his kinsman Vincent Cranfield out of a scrape. Friends of every degree appeal to him to find wives for their sons, and husbands for their daughters; there are thanks for the loan of a valuable 'brach' [a dog], or for the recipe for a cake.

With his large acquaintance at Court, in the army, in Parliament, and the country, and always in close attendance upon the King, he was able to speak the word in season that could advance the interests of his many applicants, yet he never misused his influence. He was at this time equally intimate with men who were about to take opposite sides in the impending struggle—with Lord Clarendon, then Hyde, at that time on the Parliamentary side; with the Hobarts, Lord Saye and Sele, and Lord Brooke; with Lord Pembroke, the high chamberlain, representing the Puritan interest; with Lord Warwick, soon to be admiral of the fleet under the Parliament; with Lord Carnarvon, killed on the King's side at Newbury, whose wife's picture by Vandyke hangs at Claydon; with the Dillons, both Lords Rosecommon, of whom James was brother-in-law to Strafford; with Sir William Uvedale, paymaster of the King's army, and with Lord Cork and his family. The letters from men and women of such different characters and stations show a remarkable degree of respect and affection for Sir Edmund, each after his and her kind, while in the closer knowledge of those at home, among his own and his wife's relations, he was beloved in the highest degree. His mother-in-law, the very cross though excellent Lady Denton, who plagues her friends all round her in spite of the kindness which she shows towards them, has always a good word for Sir Edmund.

Lady Verney, with a fresh baby almost every year, became less and less able to help her husband in the multifarious business which occupied him, and it more and more devolved upon his right-hand friend and councillor, Ralph, who was

far more learned in affairs and punctual in his business habits than Sir Edmund with his different nature and training could ever hope to be.

During the next few years Sir Edmund was still living in Drury Lane, in constant attendance at Court, and, when his wife and children were not with him in London, riding down to Claydon if he could spare the time; but even when guests were staying in his house, the master was often unable to be present. There was no other mode of conveyance excepting the slow waggons or the 'coch'—a private carriage, which was merely a sort of cart without springs, with leathern curtains against the weather, a most unluxurious luxury used only by infirm persons or delicate women who could not ride. An enormous trunk belonging to the Standard-bearer, which only a strong waggon could possibly convey, still exists in an outhouse at Claydon. The distances which were thought nothing of by gentlemen on horseback appear from different royal progresses and journeys. In 1639, Sir Edmund is described as riding 339 miles with the King southwards from Berwick in four days.

In 1634 Sir Edmund established himself in a large new house on the north side of Covent Garden, called the Piazza. It was the most recent addition to the 'West End,' and was probably considered the South Kensington or Tyburnia of that generation. Sir Edmund took the last two houses, running from Russell Street, upon lease, at a rent of 160*l.*, with coachhouse and stables behind. It is particularly noticed that though the ordinary rooms had only casements, the principal apartments were arranged with 'shuttynge wyndowes,' and that the doors had 'stock locks.' Some of the rooms were 'waynscotted.' There was no sewer as yet in the new district, and Sir Edmund stipulated that if he were so much annoyed as not to be able to live there 'with any conveyency,' he might give up his lease at a six months' notice; the state of the square, indeed, is described as very barbarous. Part of the house was occupied by Sir Edmund's mother, and Sir Nathaniel Hobart had also a

'study,' or chambers, there, though his home was at Highgate. Separated only by a 'fence wall' was another house, where lived Sir Edward Sydenham, with whom and his wife the Verneys were extremely intimate. He was about the Court, and she and her sister, Vere Lady Gaudy, were almost like sisters to the Knight-Marshal and his wife.

Sir Edmund's money matters unfortunately did not improve as time went on. It must have been a considerable addition to his pecuniary troubles that the dress of a gentleman of the privy chamber and 'Kt. Marshall of England' at the Court of which Henrietta Maria was the ruling spirit, was not only extremely expensive, but was continually changing. The 'crimson sattin dublit and scarlett hoase laced with gould lase,' which appear in Sir Edmund's tailor's bill for 1632, must have suffered damage under the wear and tear of even holiday use. The 'black velvet cloake lyned with plush' would look shabby after the horseman had splashed in muddy weather after the King. Signs of Court festivals and masques, where the Court appeared in splendour, can be traced by the Verney lists of clothes, and in 1633, when Charles, attended by his Court, went down to Scotland to hold a Parliament and be crowned, the amount of fine garments required is tremendous. The 'purple satten suite'; the 'cloath-of-gold waiscote and cappe'; the 'willow colored satten suite, and cloake laced all over doble, cutt in small paines'; and the sum paid 'to the Embroderer for setting on the lace,' equal to about 20*l.*, probably mark the particular dress worn at the great ceremony itself. The 'shamoy leather dublett with scarlet rockett, and hoase for rideinge'; the 'Cordovan skins for a Buffe coat'; 'the cloath sute, the skirts wrought in Picken-dell, with two sharps on the hoase, and rich buttons,' mysterious though the description may be, sounds more in harmony with his soldier taste. The total cost, representing 260*l.* of money at its present value, must have made a deep inroad into Sir Edmund's income, encumbered as it was.

He was one of the most sanguine of men, and an account of the number of schemes which he entered upon affords a

pretty good list of the projects by which men attempted to obtain good investments in the years 1625 to 1642, when the spirit of adventure had risen high in matters of commerce, and men of all conditions were trying their unaccustomed hands at trade, often with borrowed money.

Sir Edmund had very little success of any kind. He began with a share in a patent for 'garblinge' tobacco within the realmes of England and Ireland, the dominion of Wales, and the towne of Barwicke' (which had still a separate existence), 'with an allowance of fower pence in the pound.' The tobacco patent came to an end in 1638, when ^{Feb. 1,} the High Lord Treasurer, Juxon, demanded the surrender ^{1638.} of the monopoly. Next came negotiations for buying some of the confiscated lands in Ireland, which, fortunately for him, came to nothing, or his money would have been absolutely lost.

Another patent in which Sir Edmund had an interest was for hackney coaches. These, it is said, first appeared in the streets of London in 1625, when a stand of them was established at the Maypole in the Strand. Under pretence, however, that 'the King and his dearest consort the Queen, the nobility, and others of place and degree were disturbed in their passage, that the pavement was destroyed, and the streets pestered by the number of coaches for hire, the King began by limiting the power of hiring hackney coaches to persons who wanted to go three miles out of town.' He then allowed licences to fifty persons, each holding twelve horses, the Master of the Horse, Lord Hamilton, being at the head. Sir Edmund's share often got him into great trouble with the coachmen, who were rebellious subjects in more ways than one. He was also partner in a 'patent for sealing woollen yarn before it was sold or wrought into cloth.'

He took shares in a lease of some of the fen lands reclaimed by the Earl of Bedford, an old acquaintance. Sir Edmund is also mentioned in a patent 'for the supply of

¹ "'To garble' was once to sift and pick out the best."—Trench, *On the Study of Words*, ed. 1888, p. 81.

turfe to be taken from the waste places of his Majesty's dominions for 14 years,' in conjunction with Sir Thomas Culpeper, but the deed remains unsigned, and appears not to have been carried out. Sir Thomas proved to be a very untrustworthy man, and Sir Edmund drew back in time.

In 1640 the King borrowed 1,000*l.* from him, as from others of his household, and considering the uncertainty of affairs, Sir Edmund arranged that, in lieu of repayment of the principal, his heirs after his death should receive an annuity of 400*l.* for twenty years. The money was secured upon the 'Aulnage,' a tax paid for the measuring of cloth, and as he had only a life interest in his landed property, he left this annuity as a chief part of the provision for his younger children. It turned out a very bad investment, and after Sir Edmund's death the family were involved in endless legal proceedings, and petitions to Parliament, and in such a mass of correspondence, that the very name of the Aulnage has a terrible sound to any reader of the Verney MSS.

Finally, the outlays for land in Virginia, New England, and 'the Barbathos' which were made by Sir Edmund for the advancement of Tom, his vagabond son, must have amounted to a large sum, which never brought him in a penny of return, except once, when a cargo of cotton was sent by Tom to 'Amsterredam,' with grandiloquent promises of its extraordinary excellence, but which proved, as with most amateur merchants, not to be exactly what was required, and had therefore to be sold at a very low price.

Sir Edmund does not seem to have realised that the making of money is a profession in itself, requiring knowledge, time, and care, none of which in his busy life was he able to afford to his many schemes. Indeed, it never appears that he bettered his finances by those adventures, while he enormously increased his anxieties by the money which he borrowed to carry them out.

CHAPTER V.

SIR EDMUND'S FOUR SONS—RALPH THE HEIR.

1625-1639.

THE strange variety of character in members of the same family is seldom seen in a more striking degree than among Sir Edmund's four sons. Ralph the heir was a prudent, cautious man, affectionate and conscientious, who spared no pains for those who loved him, and for many who behaved very ill to him, in the difficult times which tried the spirit and temper of all men to the quick. On his shoulders his friends and relations laid their burdens without mercy, and often without thanks, and relied upon him, not in vain, in all their troubles. He had inherited his father's helpful nature, but whereas Sir Edmund's kind deeds were those of a grand seigneur, with whom no one dared to take a liberty, Ralph, old before his time, a husband and father before he was out of his teens, with a great love of business and a most practical mode of doing it, was made use of and reproved by the older members of his family—always excepting his father—and sponged upon by the younger, as one who had married a rich wife, and to whose assistance in purse and influence they had a right. Somewhat precise and formal in these early days, Ralph's long, elaborate compliments, painfully worked out in foul copies which he carefully preserved, fill his letters to the exclusion of what would be really interesting; one such is headed: 'This was never writ to any one,' and was evidently reserved for some transcendently important occasion which never came.

Born
Nov 9,
1613.

After all, his style is only an exaggeration of that usual

in the letters of the period, which are full of provoking excuses, at the most important moments, that 'there is here no news' or that the receiver 'will have it from better hands.' In 1631 the family were all living at Claydon—the four sons coming and going; the girls still children; and Dorothy Leeke, fair and lively, daughter of Sir Edmund's half-sister, a great favourite with the household, and not less so with Ralph's college friends.

The duty of a good father in those days required that an eligible marriage should be arranged for his sons at the earliest possible opportunity. A little heiress, Mary Blacknall, had been left an orphan at about nine years old; her father, John Blacknall, Mayor of Abingdon, and his wife both died in 1625, 'at one instant time,' of the 'great plague,' and their monument is yet to be seen in the church of St. Nicholas at Abingdon. John Blacknall was of 'an humble, meek spirit, and gentle nature; affable and full of clemencie and curtesie.' His kindly qualities descended to his daughter, as well as his large estate. This included the site of the Abbey of Abingdon, curious papers relating to which are among the deeds of her property at Claydon, and have been published by the Camden Society.

Mary, as an unprotected orphan, came under the jurisdiction of the Court of Wards. Four of her relations procured from the Court a lease of her lands and the custody of her person, with the privilege, when she should be fourteen, of bestowing her in marriage, for which they paid down 1,000*l.* to the Crown, and gave bond for the payment of another 1,000*l.* One of the guardians, Libb, concocted a match between her and his son; 'the licence was had, the wedding apparel bought, and the priest ready,' she being only eleven years of age. Another guardian, however, her uncle Wiseman, appealed to the Court against this arrangement, which was clearly a breach of trust, and an order was made 'that the ward unmarried, unaffyed, and uncontracted' should, under a penalty of 5,000*l.*, be sent to Lady Denham of Boarstall in Bucks, mother of the poet, to be brought up with her own daughters. Three of the guardians then

offered her to Sir Edmund Verney for his eldest son. Sir Edmund agreed to take the child, and pay the 1,000*l.* still due to the Crown, her uncle stipulating that she should not be forced in marriage, but should be well-bred, 'and be allowed to make her choice at years competent.' Still there were difficulties, but Sir Edmund procured a decree from the Court of Wards in his own favour, and in May 1629, aged thirteen, she was married to Ralph, who was not yet sixteen. Lady Verney writes to Mrs. Wiseman from Claydon: 'Your neece and my sonne are now marred. God send them as much happiness as I wish them, and then I am sure it will be to all our comforts'; she excuses herself for the privacy of the marriage, but hopes to see the Wisemans at Claydon, 'wher, though you will not find a wedding feast, yett I will assure you of the heartiest welcome I can give; and shall allwayes rest thanckfull to you for the favour. Mr. Verney is gone to Courte, but commanded mee to present his love and service.'

The girl herself writes: 'Good aunt, besides the desire I have to heare of your health and my uncle's I thinck it fitt to acquaint you that now I am married, in which state I hope God will give mee his blessings and make it happy to mee'; she was anxious that the marriage should be 'privately done, and soe it was. . . . As I had your loving advice to it, soe I assure myself I shall have your prayers for the good success of it.'

Mrs. Wiseman complains that she was not more consulted, although she and her husband 'ever intened this macho.' She desires her niece always to honour the Verneys 'as your parants, for so now thay be, and God will give a blesinge upon you.' She mentions that Aunt Libb, who had striven to marry the girl to her own son, 'sayth that shee hoppeth that I shall repent the mach as much as anything that I ever ded, but I have a betero beleafe'; and thus the unseemly quarrel over the possession of the poor child ended. She had fallen into good, kind hands, though as it were by accident. The married couple did not live together for two years. Mary returned to her relations for some

time, and an effort seems to have been made even then to induce her to repudiate the marriage.

Ralph, aged seventeen, was now studying at Magdalen Hall, where his father's friend, Edward Hyde, afterwards Lord Clarendon, and his young uncle William Denton, had been before him. As Crowther, his Oxford tutor, writes to him during the summer vacation in 1631, exhorting him not to give up his studies for Hymen's delights, and tells him that the sweetness of a kiss will relish better after the harshness of a syllogism, with much in the same strain, it is evident that all is right between him and his wife.

In the reign of James I. Magdalen, which was very specially the Bucks College, had been called 'a very nest of Puritans,' and the Hall retained this character when the College, under the influence of Laud and his visitors, had become a thoroughly Royalist centre. The Hall at this time was not only a numerous, but a very powerful body, to which all the chief Puritan families in England sent their sons. Henry Wilkinson was the prominent tutor, under whom young Edmund Verney was afterwards placed in 1636. The proportion of matriculations at the different colleges contrasts strangely with the present day. In the earliest year for which the lists are given (1638) the numbers are: Christ Church, 27; Merton, 7; University, 10; Balliol, 26; while Exeter, 41, and Magdalen Hall, 40, stand far the highest of all. Here Ralph continued for about two years, and long letters from Crowther, in a cramped scholastic hand, give many details concerning the course of study at the University. The difficulty of obtaining good text-books was extremely great until quite recent times, but such is the crowd of text-books, summaries, and digests that beset the modern undergraduate that it is difficult to see the wood for the trees. In the seventeenth century every man had more or less to compile his own, and Crowther sends Ralph astronomy notes which he had himself put together for his pupil, with 'a sheet containing the differences and computes of time.' Afterwards he gives him 'a generall scheme of the Arts and a genealogy of the Kings.' Again, he begs 'that he will

devote to Logic and Divinity from three to four houres a day.'

'I have not initiated you into the science of geography' [it was not until 1899 that the University School of Geography was established in Oxford]. 'If you cannot have leisure to come over hither, I'll attend you for a week or soe at Claydon till I have shewed you the principall grounds,' says Crowther. He intends to 'draw forth his notes after a more stately form' in a short time, and lends him books out of his own collection.

Ralph seems to have acquired a fair knowledge of Latin, scraps of which he sometimes quotes in his letters, and he possesses several Latin 'Historyes,' but there is no mention of Greek either for him or his brother. Belief in astrology and divination of various kinds was still strong. The importance of ascertaining the exact moment of a birth, in order to calculate nativities, is seen in Lord Fermanagh's genealogical record of the Verney family, e.g. 'Sir Ralph Verney was born at Hillesdon on a Tewsdai, betwixt x and xi a clock at night, being the 9th day of November in the 11th yeare of y^e Raigne of K. James,' although the date of a marriage, which would now be considered more important, is often omitted.

During Ralph's stay at Oxford the death of Thomas Allen, 'the best astrologer of his time,' aged ninety-two, is recorded. A horoscope among the Verney papers, a few years after, shows the whole array of planets and the qualities and events which they forebode.

In 1631, Mary Verney came to Claydon, where she and her young husband, in his eighteenth year, lived with the rest of the family, Ralph still going on with his studies at Oxford, and riding over twenty miles to his home, sometimes in such a storm of rain that his tutor Crowther laughs at him for his zeal. The marriage turned out a singularly happy one, except in the matter of health. With one of the sweetest tempers and most cheerful dispositions that ever woman was blessed with, Mary Verney had a backbone of sense and spirit and of high principle, which made her indeed, as Crowther

wrote of her to Ralph, 'your sweetest comfort.' She kept the peace with the brothers—the selfish Henry and the scapegrace Tom; Edmund, who was warmly attached to her, always calls her 'my sweetest sister.' 'Mischiefe' was one of the pet names for her in the family. Dr. Denton never mentions her without some tender epithet, and to Sir Edmund she was a favourite daughter, to whom he turned on all occasions for sympathy and affection. In the difficult relations of life entailed by having no separate homes, but living all together, it is to the credit of both that Dame Margaret Verney was quite as fond of Mary as was Sir Edmund, and at her death, in 1641, it is Mary who is condoled with and pitied for the loss of 'our mother' far more than her own daughters, mostly children.

It gives a pleasant view of Ralph's character to see how kindly the good advice which his tutor pours upon him is received, and even after his Oxford days are over the little lectures are still accepted. Crowther, sending some of his notes on logic and astronomy, says, 'Had I not watcht late at night, I could hardly have despatched them. I shall desire your paines in the reading. God hath given you sufficient intellectuals, and he then requires that you be not wanting to yourself. You know what honour to his family, what a credit to himself (to let goe religious motives), doth a gentleman purchase, who hath not only the outward gifts of fortune, but is fraught with the diviner perfection of mind. Make not your natural weaknesse [his health was not good] a fond plea for your future neglect.'

June 12,
1633.

Crowther goes on, 'Your kind acceptance of my last letter is more welcome to me than any of your favours, in that I see you soe seriously affected with what most of our gallants would take distasteful. . . . but I remember 'tis a letter noe treatise I have in hand, and whilst I shew myselfe officious to y^r occasions I may be tedious to y^r patience. Y^{rs} to be commanded whilst I am.' 'Bound you are much to God, that whereas He suffers thousands of your rank to run on in their sinful vanities, it has pleased Him through his Fatherly chastisements to bring you to a knowledge of Him-

June 29,
1633.

self. We are all Prodigalls,' etc. 'I should blame myself for not sending before, but what else the court may alter in others, it hath not made you see little reall as to measure a friend by a compliment.' He ends by 'desiring a service to your sweetest comfort.' 'God hath afflicted you with many sad crosses within a short space, with the losse of a child, the danger of your own and wife's life through a contagious disease, and now the hurting of your shoulder. Interpret these not as signs of his hatred towards you, but rather of his love. . . . See how many of as greate fortunes and hopes as yourself, of as young years and greater strength, hath it pleased God to cut off in this infectious malady, out of which he has given you an escape. Bee you more humble and thankful.' Aug. 30,
1633.

Mr. Ralph Verney's tailor's bills for 1632-33 comprise such very fine clothes, that they have evidently served at the King's coronation in Edinburgh, where he accompanied Sir Edmund and joined in the festivities of the Court before and after; but as he and his father were almost always together, the letters were few at this period.

As to the dress of the ladies of Puritan sympathies, Mary Verney in her portrait by Vandyck, 1636, affects no ascetic simplicity. She wears a pale blue satin gown, open over white, looped up with pearls, and a string of pearls round her neck, a fringe of light hair curled on each side her forehead; she is 'bigg with E. V.' (her eldest son) according to the catalogue, and is proud of her condition.

The relation between the father and his eldest son was extremely touching, in an age when the formalities of respect exacted were often extremely burdensome. Sir Edmund's letters are playful and easy, with unbounded confidence in Ralph's judgment, good sense, indefatigable industry, and kindness, though he permits himself a laugh at his son's want of horsemanship, his little care for field sports, his over-caution for his father in time of war, and his small formalities and particularities.

In fact, Sir Edmund was very much the younger man of the two, and continued so to the end of his life. Brave,

chivalrous, gay in the midst of all his perplexities and troubles, it was not till the year 1641 that the loss of his wife, the arbitrary course taken by the King in politics, and the almost Popish proceedings of Laud in Church matters, seem to have broken his spirit or rather his heart. 'You ar so good a sone that I see your father can do nothing of bisness without you,' writes Lady Sussex to Ralph, and to Sir Edmund she writes: 'you have a son truly good; i pray God make hum happy every way for i thinke ther cannot bee a bettir yonge man.'

Aug. 20,
1665.

There is a pretty little note from Sir Edmund, to his 'good daughter Mary,' from Bath. 'I cannott prevaile with y^e Husband to leave mee without a quarrell, therefore good heart forgive us boath, since his absence is against boath our wills, hee is every day in the batho, I praye God it may doe him good; for my parte, I am suer I find none in it, but since I am come heere, I will try the uttermost of it, that I may not be reproacht att my retorne for doeing things by halves; att our first coming the towne was empty, butt now itt is full of very good company, and we pass our time awaye as merrily as paine will give us leave' . . . 'and soe deare heart, farewell, yo^r lovinge father and faithfull frend.'

Jan. 5,
1636.

The next winter Ralph has been writing about his father's greyhounds, and Sir Edmund replies, 'I am glad you are soe merry with my Hounds, I am contented to reprove them, but it were Alms to hang you, for I knowe you can accuse them only by hearesaye, for you will not take the paines to informe yourself by taking a view of theyr behaviour.'

Sir Edmund went very thoroughly into the management of the estate and garden, the letting of farms, &c., and sent frequent and minute directions to be carried out by Ralph and the steward; farm rents were much higher than at present: 'The Gardner shall pleach noe Hedge this yeare,' Sir Edmund writes . . . 'if you fiend him fidle about his woarke, agree with him by the great for trewly I will noe longer indure his daye woarke; it is intollerable to beare with his knavery.' 'Bid Roades have a care for the timber of the ould barn att the



Cornelius Jansen

RALPH VERNEY, ESQ.

Inn and lett him laye the ould thatch where itt may make muck or els uppon great Napson meadow, if hee thinck itt fitt.' His horses were many, as was required in days when riding was the only means of going from place to place; but the farm horses were eked out by 'plowing oxen.' 'I am not sorry the gray nagge is sould, though I should have been glad to have had more for him, but I will not part with the white geldenge, unless I may have £35 for him,' a large sum for a horse in those days. 'I am sorry to heare your horses thrive as ill as myne. I would send as many cart horses as I could to the fenns, there they would gather flesh at an easy charge.'

March 23,
1636.

The perpetual trouble of buying new and expensive horses to take the place of those which go lame and grow old and sick and have to be sold at a loss, every one will sympathise with who has had to do with horseflesh. The colts come to grief, the dams miscarry, the old horses go blind, and the war-horses which have to be sent to the army fall lame upon the road.

'I think it will do the colts no hurt to play abroad in the heate of the day, but I heare the piede coults got his mischance by a stroake of one of the cart horses, and that must be by carelessness of servants.'

Ralph asks his father to get him sent with Lord Arundel, who was going as ambassador extraordinary to the Emperor Ferdinand II. Sir Edmund writes a cheerful letter in answer, saying that 'My Lord Marshall is goeing a fine journe, and noe man would bee gladder of such an opportunity to lett you see something abroad, then I should bee,' and then proceeds to give his many reasons tail foremost, the real one at the end. 'In the first place, you know I cannot settle my business without you;' secondly, 'my Lord must be gone on Munday next att the farthest. If neyther of thes will sattisfy you, the third shall; that is, hee will take noboddy with him, for hee has refused my Lord Russell, my Lord Grandison [a nephew of the Duke of Buckingham], my Lord Anduver, and in breefe all others, my Lord Dawbingny only excepted, and hee goes with him.'

March 30,
1636.

Now, I thinck your journey is att an end, and soe with my love to my daughter, I remain your loving father.'

Jan. 19,
1686

It was by no means always on matters of business that the father and son wrote to each other. Scraps of 'noos,' absurd incidents, come in between the letting of the home-stall and the close, the selling of the sheep, and the account of his dogs and horses. 'To requite yo^r noos of yo^r fish, I will tell you as good a tale from hence, and as trewe. A merchant of lundon wrote to a factor of his beyoand sea, desired him by the next shipp to send him 2 or 3 Apes; he forgot the r, and then it was 203 Apes. His factor has sent him fower scoare, and sayes hee shall have the rest by the next shipp, conceiving the merchant had sent for tow hundred and three apes; if yo^r self or frends will buy any to breede on, you could never have had such a chance as now. In earnest this is very true.'

Sir Edmund was consulted about marriages, then settled by parents with more regard for the suitableness of the portions than for the inclination of the parties. He needs information about 'Mr. Tho. Turvill's estate, because his sonne is tendered to a frend of myne for a marrage.'

April 25,
1639.

When Sir Edmund was with the King in the Scotch war, Ralph wrote to him: 'I am infinitely sorry to heare the Scotts continue in there stubbournness, for I feare if they come to blowes the business will not be easily ended, but we must referre all to God, and pray him to prepaire us for troubles here, and peace hereafter. I have hitherto been a little too negligent of getting my armes,' says the unwarlike Ralph, 'but now I will hasten them.' He asks his father to inquire of Captain Sydenham 'where and when I shall have my Pistolls . . . I pray send mee your opinion whither I had not best bespeake a Waggon presently and what other provisions I had best make. I would bee loath to bee utterly unprovided. You that are soe near and know more, may judg better of it than I can, therefore I humbly crave your advice. I confess I say not this that I am at all fond of the journey, or that I can say I shall leave your affairs heere in soe good order as that I may conveniently

come. I hope if need bee you can furnish mee with an horse, that will be readier than any that can be brought by mee.'

This very uncheerful letter is a contrast to Sir Edmund's gay postscript to his reply, 'I pray goe to Nedd Herbert [one of the Pembroke family] from mee, and tell him I will not wright to him till I can send him an inventory of the Skotts I have kild'; he still retained his buoyant spirit, little as he approved of the war in which he had to take part. 'I will inquire for a nagg for you,' he says another time, 'but charity beginns at home, and I will first provide for myself if I can'

Fortunately for Ralph the campaign came to an end before he was able to join his father, and he went on diligently with the work for which he was so much more fitted, managing the large estates, some of them much scattered, of his wife and his father, helping his mother, looking after the affairs of his nine brothers and sisters, his uncles, aunts, and cousins innumerable, writing politics to Lady Barrymore, Lady Sussex, Dillon, Burgoyne, &c., doing commissions in London for his most exacting friends, and finally, at the end of 1639, preparing to stand for Aylesbury in the Parliament which it was evident that Charles would soon be obliged to summon.

CHAPTER VI.

TOM VERNEY. A 'PICTURESQUE VAGABOND.'

1634 1642.

Born
Nov. 2,
1615.

OF all sons 'doomed their father's soul to cross' (for worse reasons, however, than that of rhyming), Tom Verney was certainly the most trying, and the most plausible. Sir Edmund had a fall from his horse, on his way to Scotland, and a report of his death reached his boys at school at Gloucester. Tom sat down at once and wrote his mother a string of pious platitudes, with a long list of clothes to be sent him 'as soon as possibly you can, and I shall forever pray that you may live to see your children's children and comfort of them all.'

July 10,
1634.

At eighteen he proposed to take to wife the 'good daughter' of a Mr. Futsin, to whom he wrote, but without the smallest pretence of asking his own father's leave. 'The thing was commonly spread about the house and I verily thought it came to my father's ears,' he says jauntily, when reproached for his conduct. Sir Edmund, much displeased, resolved to send him out as a settler. The Puritan emigration to America had now been going on for several years; thousands of the best men in England—merchants, lawyers, farmers, scholars—were flying across the Atlantic; great landowners, like Lord Say and Lord Broke, were preparing to follow, believing that England would no longer be a free home for them; it was therefore quite natural that Sir Edmund should consider the opening a good one for his young son. Lady Verney undertook the arrangements with an emigration agent, who writes to her

at great length setting forth the necessary outfit. He recommends that he do take three servants at least with him, which will cost 12*l.* for 'passage and apparel.' He had better 'bringe up with him fether bed, blanquetts, and three payre of sheets, it is but a spare [pack] horse to bring them. Although many howshowlds in Virginia are so well provided as to entertayne a stranger with all things necessary for the belly, yeat few or non are better provided for the back then will serve their on turne.' He must take some corn, 'least ther should happen a scarsity in the cuntry, which some tymes doth fall out, through the covetousness of the planters, that strive to plant much tobacco and littell corne. I have already bought the flower, the fowling peeces, the strong waters and the groserie wares. . . . if he settell a plantation for himself he shold have som seasoned men of his own.'

Lady Verney immediately packed Tom's apparel, and sent him off with an affectionate letter, saying that 'my sonne hath neither beene bread abroad, nor used to any bartering at home, but only brodd at schoole, and so I doubt wilbe to seeke in that imployment that he is going to undertake; therefore I shall entreate that favour from you, if any one is going out whom you can trust, a littell to direct him in his coarces; I shall take it as a great favour.' 'If they will but acknolledg him to be the sonne of his father you shall engage both his father and myself to acknolledg your courtesie.' She sends up a servant to buy all necessary things. The various 'casks, and barrells, shot, and muskets, goods, provisions and servants, with the charges, doe amount to 117*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*' A good cabin was secured for him.

In nine months, however, Master Tom was back again, and his outfit wasted, which in the state of his father's finances was a serious loss. Ralph, in the emergency, was most kind to him, and helped to make peace with Sir Edmund, who was naturally much annoyed.

Tom was next sent as a volunteer on board a king's ship, the 'St. Andrew,' in the ship-money fleet now cruising in

July 1635.

the Channel, and he writes to his 'loving and kind brother that we are bound to the French coast to see what they will say to us'; 'there is a fleet of Spaniards lyes off Falmouth is the newes'; 'there is warre proclaimed with France, the King of Spaine is soe much the more joyfuller, by reason that our kinge's fleet doth assist him in it.' After which come the usual postscripts, 'that you will speak for mee to my mother, for travellers ever want money.' 'Your loving brother as long as life lasts,' writes the incorrigible, who, having grown tired of the sea, announces that he is setting off for Flanders. 'I do not intend to make a long stay there, only to see what fortunes a younger brother might attain unto, and withall to see how I shall like the country, and so to live there, and serve the Prince Cardinall.' He 'never intends to go for Holland, because wee have better paye from the Cardinall than from the States.'

A few months afterwards he is back in London, lodging with the keeper of the Marshalsea, a servant of his father's, to whom Sir Edmund 'hath given express command' that no one is to buy anything for him without his leave, 'which much discontents me, for now I must desire to have those things that are fitting for mee to weare.' To his father he writes that he hopes 'when you have heard the good report my Captaine will relate to you, that out of your noble mind you will remitt and forgive all my former offenses, and those faults which I have formerly and in such a base manner committed against so good a father as you are.' He hopes for the future 'to beare a noble mind in all my actions, as where before I was ignoble.' 'Let these lines stirr you to have pittie upon mee, that I may receive one smiling and merry countenance from you, which I have formerly seen angry and frowning,' signed 'your true penitent and obedient sonn till death.' Words were never wanting to Tom; his protestations of amendment, his demands for money, his pious reflections, his crazy scatter-brained projects for some fresh change which is always to make his fortune, ran as off a reel from his pen, never ending, still beginning, during the whole of his long misspent life, which lasted until

he was ninety-two, when all his brothers and sisters had gone.

The next letter shows how kind Sir Edmund was to the scapegrace. Tom writes to his father that he has had a message from him through his brother 'which did containe so much comfort, that he could not choos but present to your mercyful eye these lines, that you might thereby understand that I am leading a new life, which shall not only yield great comfort to yourself, but be a comfort to all my friendes.' He desires his mother's blessing and so, *da capo*, begs for money and clothes.

Shortly after he takes service in the army of France, and draws bills upon Ralph for his equipment; the amounts are always to be 'faithfully paid' after the next fight.

'I understand that my father and you doe mistrust that I am run away from my Colonel, which is noe small grief to me; becaus I have brought soe many letters from my Collonell to his ffrinds in London, and I hope in God to carry him as good news back. This is the last you shall receive from mee as long as I have being, sine you have so ill opinion of me.' In a few days, forgetting his wrath, he will be with them, 'by the grace of God, with my best love within a fortnight.'

He is next heard of in France: 'my employment will cost May 1636. me 40*l*.' He then begs for 20*l*., but desires Ralph to keep it from his father's ears; 'lest it hinder me of that money.'

At Paris.—'My Lieutenant-Colloncl hath not restored to July 1636. mee my clothes,' he writes, 'which doth very much discontent me. I wanted money to buy me a hors and other necessities fitting me.' He requests the money may be sent quickly as he has got some one to lend it who knows his family, 'and I know you are of too good and loving a nature to see mee disgraced for so small a sum. Within two months after our fight, I will repay you with an innumerable of thanks . . . and I shall have more caus than ever I had to pray for the hous of Verney. I have orders to march to La Chapelle, which was taken within this fortnight by the Spaniard. There we shall remaine most part of the

summer. If it pleases God to send me life, after the fight is over, I shall by his grace send you a true relation of it.'

From Noyon comes a fresh letter demanding 'that small courtesy of the money. My honour and fortune lyes ingaged in it.' He writes soon after 'at the Marshalseyes,' 'Before I will borrow I will starve,' yet 'I would trouble you to lend me 20s.'

Nov. 31,
1637.

In the autumn he has started off again and writes from Gottenburg: 'Dear father, your goodnes hath been so often expressed unto mee that I cannot omitt any occasion of presenting you with these lines,' and mentions in an airy manner that he is on his road to 'Stockhollam,' and that letters enclosed to 'Collonell Vavasor or Collonell Fleetwood' will find him. 'Speak to my father,' he writes to Ralph, 'not to send for mee back by any means becaus I am in a very hopeful waye of preferment . . . As our journey proves prosperous, soe I hope to give you soe good content in all my proceedings, that what expence soever you have been att for mee, is only, to restore a stragling shepp, that wandered from his felows.'

Dec. 1637.

At 'Stockhollam' he came across some old Scotch veterans belonging to Gustavus Adolphus's army, who were still serving after his death.

'Honoured Sir,' he begins, and talks of his 'extraordinary deal of busyness.' 'Colonell fleetwood hath had within this month, or such a matter, four of his companies cutt off by the enemy, only his officers saved, which doe lye heavy upon his hand; therefore I believe he will not be able to do me any curtesy where he is now.' He hopes to have an answer within less than two months, 'if the passage be not stopt.' 'Concerning my own occasions, I do according to your commands stay in Swedlan, partly to learne the language, and partly in great hopes of præferment, with one Collonell Lasly, neer allyed to felt Martiall Lasly, and all this cannot possibly be done without great expence. It costs mee two and twenty shillings a week for my diet, lodging, and washing, besides other expences,' &c., &c.; and he desires money will be sent to pay his master for teaching him,

or else to send for him home. In the next letter he has taken up 'two and fifty pound sterling, to cleare my lodging, and the rest which is left to bring mee to Collonell Fleetwood, if the enemy will permitt mee; I must pass through three of the enemies countreys, through Denmark, through Pomerland, and through great part of Poland'; he has 'engaged an englishman, bred a souldier, which can speak the language extreamey well'; but as all this expense is incurred when Col. Fleetwood 'hath more officers than he hath souldiers,' he does not believe he will be able to give him any preferment; he hopes his father 'will not think amiss of him for taking up so much money, for if my life lay on it, I could not help it; for everything is soe extreame deare that it would greeve any one to see it, as you shall see by that little bill which I have enclosed. . . . I rest your most dutifull sonn.'

He is in England a month or two after this, and during the rest of the year 1638 he is in London getting into debt and quarrels, or down at Claydon where his father sends him to keep him out of mischief. Before he starts he has a duel on hand, and he writes to his brother Edmund, 'at the Pohatzo Coven Garden,' for his countenance. 'I would entreat you to be with mee by 7 of the clock in the morning, or els not at all, becaus I am to meet a gentleman att eight of the clock about some words which past between him and myself on Friday, and would entreat to make noebody acquaint with it, becaus I would not have it known. If you are not willing, I pray send me by the porter my russett shooes, and my greyest pair of worsted stockings with garters and ribbins to them, and laced band and cuffs if they bee don; if not, a plaine band, to put on to-morrow. I have a great company of young gentlemen with mee, which goes forth in the King's fleet, or else I had come over myself to-night.'

Next he tries to make Ralph buy some horses of his: 'as for the mare, you never had a better in your life'; but in another letter he acknowledges they are worth nothing, and sends him a 'fox coat' in payment of ten pounds he had borrowed of him. The servants at Claydon and his

July 17,
1688.

grandmother at Hillesden were warned not to lend him money, or even a horse, lest he should sell it. His debts up and down appear to be many, and he is afraid that some of his creditors may go to his father; he declares they have good pledges, all but six and forty pounds, which he cannot account for.

July 22,
1688.

He is miserable 'at living like a hermitt or a country fellow,' and 'would goe anywhere, to the West Indies, or some unknown place in the world.' 'I should prove myself worse than a Turke if I did not take your good counsel,' he says, after receiving five pounds; a further supply being refused, he can only scold. He proposes to go to the Palatinate a few weeks after under Colonel Hunt, or to New England if his father will give him 200*l.* in money and goods, which he says he will see well laid out. He acknowledges 'that disgrace I have formerly done you in taking such ill wayes of life,' but declares he 'shall give much content in future.' He has 'hardly any clothes left, neither bands, ruffs, shirts, boot-hose, boots, or any-thing else but is upon my back.' 'My mother hath given an express command to let me have nothing but a dons lace shirt to keep me from lice, which is extremity itself, and not the way to make mee lead a reformed life'! The tailor, however, 'charges for a gray cloth sut for Mr. Thomas Verney,' and again, 'for a collar, and callyco to lyne and stich a tafety doublet'—at this very time. 'Ther is a sute of cloths come to me, but never a coat with it, it will be very unseemlie for mee to wear my sute, and never a coat but one sorey thing which I bought about two months agoe, att a broker's, and some say as it is your old coat that you gave to your man, and I confess that it is very like yours, and as farr as I know it was yours; therefore I pray doe but judg of the goodness of it.' He then asks for 'three small parcellis of things' as a sort of appendix, 'and then I will not trouble you noe more this three months—2 paire of gloves, 2 paire of linen stockings, 2 paire of plaine boothose topps, 2 paire of woollen boothose and three handkerchiefs. A very small matter buyes them.' 'Rather than lead this hellish life

[in the quiet of the house at Claydon], I will take a rope and make an end of myself, and then neither father, mother, brother, nor sister, nor any friends els shall take any more care of me.'

Sir Edmund refused to see him, and Tom continued to the end of the year at Claydon, becoming more and more violent at the dulness. 'Idleness puts many wicked thoughts in one's head. But perhaps you may object that I may read, or walk up to Mr. Aris [the Rector] sometimes and conferre with him, or to walk in att one doore and out att the other. Too much of one thing is good for nothing, but a little of each will refresh a man's witt. For to spend my time wholly in reading doth but exercise my mind and not my body'!—'it is a poore miserable and uncomfortable life,' though he acknowledges he is in duty bound to his father, 'in that you are pleased to harbour mee under your roof.'

A number of his little sisters are at Claydon with him, and a baby of Ralph's, but he never takes the trouble to notice such uninteresting personages. His profound belief in his own importance and excellence appears throughout the letters, with threats to his father and brother that he will never write or speak to them again, if he does not get what he wants: truly a terrible penalty! On one occasion he writes to Ralph, 'there is no excuse for you not doing as I ask; my father is busy, but for you, you should send every day unto the docks enquiring after a shipp for me.'

The next spring 'he is gone to the Barbathos,' Ralph Jan. 9, writes to Henry, 'and I feare not at all amended, for about 1689. three days before hee went, hee playd mee a slippery trick, though I had many deepe protestations to the contrary. It was not discovered till he was goan.' Tom went on the recommendation of the Earl of Warwick, who had a 'plantation' in the colony. He was a friend of Lady Sussex, whom he married a few years after the death of her old husband.

Tom was sent off in a good ship, with an ample supply of necessaries by his father, and there seemed fair hopes at

Feb. 10,
1639.

length that he was disposed of satisfactorily, for some time at least. In a few months came a long letter to Sir Edmund containing a clever and amusing account of the country. 'I have obtained 100 acres of land, but not knowing how to dispose of it unless I can have such a supply as the invoice makes mention of, which, if I can have a supply according to my expectation, I make noe question but by the grace of God to rais my fortunes in a few yeares, nay, I shall be able in one yeares time to returne back the principall, which is a great incouragement both to you that doe disburs the money, and a greater to have mee continue here, which could never yett stay anywhere.

'In regard you were pleased to lay your commands upon mee to send you a true relation of the cuntrey, I have now don it with as much brevity as I could devise.

'It is the best and healthfullest in all the westerne islands; thanks be to God here is want of nothing nourishing, both for soul and body,' and he proceeds 'to give particulars of what good doctrine, good laws are here, and soe to proceed to the fruits, and last what doth most annoy us here. First, to begin with our teaching [the hum-bug!] it is not soe good as I wish it were, yet in some places it is very good, but I hope if my Lord Warwick hath bought the island, we shall have better order in the island than hitherto. Next is the law, which I thank God is indifferent good; and it would bee far better, were it not for some justices that doth make laws one court and break them the next. Until Mr. Marsham comes, wee that bee under the law, must be obedient to the law as it is, as I take it in the 8th of the Romanes. [The devil can quote Scripture.]

'Now another thing is the fruits that this land doth beare every month in the year, which is a great comfort to us. Oranges, lemons, limes, plantines, potatoes, pine-apples, guaves, and many more I will tell you the nature of in my next letter, pepper, ciunamon, ginger. . . . As to your potatoes, which is very nourishing and comfortable, it is the best provision we have in the island [evidently they were not yet common in England], both for our-

selves and servants—they will not desire after one month or two no other provisions but potatoes boyled, and mobby to drink with them, which is only potatoes boyled and press'd as hard as they can, till the juce is gon into fayre water, and after three hours this is good drink.

' Now the last and best fruit is your pine-apple, and there are two sorts—a Queen pine, and another, which I cannot well call to mind, therefor I will omit it. Now the Queen pine, when it is in your mouth, do but imagin a tast and that relisheth of it, soe it bee luscious. It is held such a dainty fruit, that King Jeames swore it was the apple that Eve cosned Adam with. I might speak more of this pine, but the description makes mee loug after it, and I beeleve you will long till you tasted of it, which I heartily wish you had one; but I feare it will not be till such time as I come myself, becaus they must have a great care in the carriage of it, or it will be labour in vain. And to proceed to my last thing: the evils that doth most annoy us, and that is partly and chiefly drunkenenes, your landerabs, &c. First drunkenness. Were it not for that great sin, this would be one of the bravest islands I ever heard of: but it doth soe much increas, that I have seen upon a Sabbath-day as I have been walking to church [a little hint at his own virtue], first one, presently after another, lye in the highway, soe drunk that here be landerabs in the land that have bitt of some of their fingers, some their toes, and hath killed some before they wakened, yott this doth not att all affright them [probably not, as they were dead]. More I could say, but as they are beasts, soe lett mee leave them like beasts, and proceede to a word or two of your landerabs. Thees landcrabs are innumerable, that you shall have them certayne months in the yeare be soe thick in the highwayes, that, doe what we can, we shall have them bite through our shoes, that we are not able to undoe them till we break their clawes; they are very like our seacrabs, but not att all soe good, becaus most of them are poysonous': and so on 'about cabiges, that grows on trees,' &c. He asks that his letter may be copied out and sent to Mr. Aris, the Rector at Claydon, whom he

had plagued for so many months, and he ends about his 'new lead life,' and 'that to tell soe much of the cuntrey cost mee many a weary step and watchful night, yett all that I can ever doe cannot be a sufficient ingagement to you who hath all ways been a deare and loving father to mee. I pray day and night for your happiness here and everlasting life in the world to come.' After which comes a postscript, saying that his 'new requests may perhaps daunt you, but 200*l.* will pay all'! and then follows an invoice of several pages in length, of every conceivable kind of commodity to be sent out to him, from 'twenty able men, wherof two to be carpenters, and a weaver who can weave diaper—to swords, 30,000 nayles of divers sorts, pickaxes, butter, good sweet oyle, six cases of strong waters for the men to drink a dram every morning, to keepe them in health (for my part I drink non)'!!!

At the same time he writes to his mother, to try a little supplementary begging. 'There is no newes worth your acceptance or worthy my labour, but that I am resolved by the grace of God to leade a new life, which I hope you will rejoyce when you heare of it from others as well as myself,' he adds prudently. 'For my owne part, I take no glory in boasting of mine owne actions, bee they good or bad, and soe I turn upon some better thing, which doth more befitt the time and my occasions, and that is concerning house-keeping. I am now a building a sorry cottage to harbour men when I have them.' He wants 'household stuff, plate, spoones, and the like, then pewter and brass of all sorts, and linnen of all sorts, both for mee and my servants.' He will not trouble his father, 'becaus this does not belong to him. I will leave them wholly to your own discretion, which knoweth better what to send, then I can in reason aske.'

In May 1639 he repeated his demands on his father, sending a fresh and enlarged invoice of his requisitions, and forwarding a testimonial from a Captain Futter, who had authority in the island, and who certifies that Tom 'is an extraordinary good husband and careful'!

In answer, Sir Edmund, full of business as he was, with a bad attack of sciatica which had forced him to leave the King at Berwick on leave for a visit to Bath, found time to write the following kind and wise letter. 'Tom, I am newly come out of Scotland, wheather I am instantly returning again, soe that by reason of my short stay heere I cannot for the present answer your letter so fully as I would doe, but I have left order with your brother to doe what can be done, but this ship makes such haste away that I believe hee will hardly gett any servants for you to send by this passage, nor doe I think fitt to send manny now, for I am informed for certaine that my Lord of Warwicke has bought a greate iland neare the place where you are, and that he intends to plant it presently. I conceive you maye have better conditions much then wher you now are, and I am sure you shall ever fiend my Lord noble and favourable to you. My Lord intends in Feb. next to goe for this iland in person, and I thinke it will bee much for your advantage to transplant yourself theather. Assoone as I return and that I know more of the businesse, I will informe you particularly of it. My Lord of Warwicke intends to fortify his iland presently, and then to plant wher hee is safe from being beaten out of it, which is a cource I like best. Inable yourself to knowe what is fitt for plantations and lett me alone to assist you if you proove industrious and careful of my directions, soe that I may putt a trust and confidence in you which as yet I dare not doe, because I have found you false to your word, and careless of all I have sayed to you. I doubt not but with your own helpe to make you a fortune, but if you continue in your old cources I will certainly forsake you. I pray God direct your heart so that I may have cause to wright myself your loving father.' And so for a time Master Tom was out of the way of his much-enduring friends, who are luckily free from his letters for the remainder of 1639.

But in 1641 the vagabond, after getting into trouble and debt in Barbadoes, returned to England apparently penniless. He was given a fresh start by his long-suffering father, and

sent back to his plantation in Jan. '42. With characteristic importunity he continued his requests for more supplies up to the eve of his departure from Gravesend, but whether the 'doz. payer of tan lether gloves and two payer of summer bootes and six bands and six payer of cuffs' were supplied to him is not recorded.

Nothing more was heard of him until April, when he wrote to his father and asked him if, 'with the great help of bridewell and the prisons,' he could procure him 100 men in August: those that he took out had fallen sick, and he had been ill himself and unable to look after them, so he had sold them to a 'chapman.' On his return to England in the summer he finds it convenient to conceal this fact from the people at Claydon, where he wanted to find more recruits for his plantation. He writes to Roades: 'if any of my men's friends doe enquire of you . . . how they are disposed of, I pray answer them with as much brevity as may be that they are all well and are upon another man's plantation till my return thither agayne. And if they should tell you that I have putt them of to other people, tell them it is not soe, and endeavour to the utmost of your power to perswade them to the contrarye. . . . As for the brewer let him not be payed till my comencing doune, and then it shall be payed wth use, but not in money but in very good blows. I have not, as yett, forgott his former courtesye he did mee att my departuer out of this kingdome, and it shall be rewarded accordingly. . . . I hope my father is not offended wth mee for my soe sudden returne from the Barbadoes. In case he be, I am extreame sorry for it and shall endeavour to make peace.'

Of the cargo he brought home, the cotton turned out to be worth litle, and there was a loss on the tobacco, so he could not make out a very good case for himself, and when at length he was about to return to his work he writes a nonchalant letter to Ralph, who had reproached him for meaning to leave the country in debt to a tailor. He first asseverates his intention to pay the man, and is furious with him for having appealed to Ralph and 'blazed it abroad

both farr and neare. . . . Now whereas you write mee word that I will never leave borrowing of such poor creatures, let me tell you lords and knights, and gentlemen of farr better rank then myself are and will be still indebted unto Taylors, and therefore I count it noe disparagement. There was a kinsman of ours (he shall be nameless becaus he is dead) that lived after a verey high rank, and perhapps you thought that he would have scorned to have been credited by a poor taylor, yet I know where he was deeply indebted to one, but the taylor is now dead and soe is he.'

The breaking out of the civil war came opportunely for Tom, who was glad to defer his return to Barbados, and offer his services in the King's army.

CHAPTER VII.

EDMUND THE YOUNG CAVALIER.

1633-1640.

Born
Nov. 2,
1616.

OF the sons of the Knight-Marshal, Edmund was the most like his father, spirited, brave, affectionate, and with a high sense of duty and honour throughout his short life to its tragic close.

June 24,
1633.

Nov. 27,
1633.

Dec. 12,
1633.

June 20,
1634.

There is little change in this England, loving to keep to the ancient ways, in a young man's education since 1630. Edmund went with Tom to a school at Gloucester, probably the King's School, and on to Winchester, whence he writes to Ralph: 'My schoole master being at London, the propositors begin to affront mee, which my companions are free from, I doe intende to intreate him to suffer mee to enjoy the same libertyes that they doe'; if not allowed, he thinks that his uncle Denton's writing would prevail. Encouraged by his brother, he takes heart. 'The propositors' words are more than their deeds and your fraternal letter has made me careless not fearing what they can doe to me.' 'I hope to see you at Crismas if my mother goeth not to London. . . . do your best endeavours that I come.'

Aug. 29,
1634.

The summer holiday seems short and precarious. Edmund writes: 'The commoners custome and the childrens are not alike . . . the children cannot goe home without the consent of the Warden and Schoolmaster, and the commoners only of there parents. The cause which makes me so desirous to goe home is, because that all the commoners doe goe home at that time and most part of the Children (though they are compelled to make great sute before they

can obtaine leave). Now to satisfye you concerning the terme of our stay, and my father's unwillingnes. Our stay is about 3 weekes in which time, they which doe stay here have not soe much taske imposed upon them, that can take up one dayes labour and if you doe obtaine your sute, you or my father neede only to write to my schoolmaster . . . that it is his pleasure to send for me home. I feare that the earnestnes of my sute hath made my father mistrust that I neglect my time, but I am sorry if it be soe . . . protesting that I never desired anything so much as learning, which I make noe question but I shall obtaine.'

If schoolboy letters of to-day are meagre enough, we are spared such laboured apologies as Edmund makes when reproached for his silence: 'Not daring to present any un-
polished lines to such a judicious reader, but finding how farr
greater a crime it is to neglect duty, than to lay my defects
to a wel wishing father, I have adventured,' etc. etc. Feb. 10,
1635.

He writes from Winchester the following Easter to Sir Edmund: 'I feare you have been informed against mee more
than is true, though . . . I have sometimes by company
been drawne to doe what did not befit mee. I have not
written this to get mony of you at my going downe . . . I
desire not a penny till you heare better of me. The cause
of my writing was because I could not expect that you would
have the patience to hear me say so much.' He is looking
forward to a visit from Ralph in the summer. 'You cannot
choose but find me if you come to Winchester, the Colledge
standing in the suburbs of the Citty.' His last terms are
more prosperous. 'I have behaved myself so fairly since
Whitsuntide that Dr. Stanley can inform my father of
nothing . . . that I need be ashamed of.' April 18,
1635.

July 28,
1635.

Dec. 8,
1635.

He was preparing, like Ralph, for Magdalen Hall, and arranging to send his bed 'by the foot-post which goeth from Winchester to Oxford.' It would be curious to know how long it took by this primitive conveyance. Edmund asks whether his father will pay for the carriage of his trunk and bed and his chamber rent for a quarter, which amount to 19s. 10d. Sir Edmund allows him 40l. a year, a cloth suit

against Easter, and his gown, or 'if he prefers to provide his gowne then 10*l.* for that and his entrance fee; if well husbanded this may maintain him well.'

March 2,
1636.

The lad writes to his brother: 'Oxford and my Tutour I lyke very wel . . . The Vicechancelor spoke to me very courteously when I came to be matriculated, he could not find fault with my Haire, because I had cut it before I went to him . . . many thanks for the load of wood you gave me. Had I time I would be more large, but now I must crave pardon for my brevity.'

April 2,
1636.

'I asked Mr. Sessions what it were fit for me to give my Tutor, he told me Mr. Jones gives him 1*l.* 5*s.* a quarter, and that he would advise me to give him the lyke.'

May 9,
1636.

'All the newes is that Mrs. Gabriel is lyke to dress noe more meate on fasting nights; for on Friday night last it was my Fortune to be there at supper with a Master of Arts and two Batchelors of our house, when Proctor Browne of Christchurch came in and tooke us, commanding mee to come to his chamber next morning. I made use of Doctor Wall, who obtained a promise of remission, but said that he would speake to mee, but would not tel Dr. Wall what it was aboute; as soone as I came to him he spoke very courteously unto me, and asked me how my father did, and desired me to remember his service to him in respect he stood obliged to him for many courtesies . . . when he lived with Mr. Cary, and to let him know that he would doe mee any favour for his sake'; so the lad got off easily for that time.

Aug. 25,
1636.

He writes in the summer: 'There is a Proctor for every house during the King's continuance in Oxford, the cheifest thing they will amend is the wearing of long haire. The Principal protested that after this day he would turn out of his house whomesoever he found with haire longer than the tips of his eares. I believe this severity wil last but a weeke, therefore I pray, if you can conveniently, send for mee towards Satterday'—hoping to save his hair. 'Beggars must be whipt, I pray execute this law upon Sessions, who is resolved to beg a peece of Venison of you. I think my Tutour will be there, who wil better deserve it than that

Miser who in my conscience if not boyle it,' evidently a crime of the first water, 'yet wil put it forth, he finding venison, and the other finding crust.'

At Christmas matters are going badly with the undergraduate, and his tutor, Henry Wilkinson, writes to Ralph : 'I must needs confess, for tis extorted from me, that your brother Edmund doth not carry himself so ingeniously as he ought in any respect. He hath in a strange manner (for what reason I know not) absented himself from my lectures, and likewise from prayer in y^e Hall. I would say more, but I desire to speake with you y^r selfe. I will meete you any day at S^t Flectwood Dormer's.' The list of Oxford misdemeanours does not apparently vary greatly from century to century.

In the next term Ralph was again appealed to ; he went over to Oxford at once, and offered to lend his brother money but on conditions which Edmund refused, while acknowledging his respect and thankfulness for Ralph's kindness, 'for the love of my credit . . . to yield to your demand would have made me the laughing stock of the whole university.' His misery is 'unsupportable,' and he is 'utterly undone.' Among the items in his account are—'For my tutouringe one yeare and a quarter 6*l.* 5*s.* To Mrs. Gabriel for meate when I tooke physicke and at other times 2*l.* 3*s.* 1*d.* To Mr. Denuis the mercer 3*l.* 15*s.* To the booke-binder 1*l.* 16*s.* To a boy that tended me the time I tooke phisick 10*s.* To John of all trades for 3 Horne combes 2*s.* 6*d.*' To his laundress, his servitor, and 'the woman making my bed' he pays 5*s.* each per quarter.

Edmund protests against 'the grievous termes' in which Ralph speaks of his 'wilful unwarrantable courses . . . I cannot conceive from what premises you exhale this conclusion.' As to his friends, there was 'a Verney' who behind his back called him cousin, who is 'something deboist,' though he railed against drinking, and asked Edmund to come and hear him preach in the town. Unpaid tavern scores and worse misdemeanours greatly distress his father. Sir Edmund is stern in proportion to his love ;

April 1637. he writes : ' Sonne, and now I have said that, my greifes grow high uppon mee; for you were a sonne in whom I tooke delight; a sonne that I had a p'ticular affection for above some others, and above most of my children. But God has in you punisht mee for that partiallity . . . you are now growen soe lewd and false that I blush to thinke you mine . . . I find by your mother that you are run in debt both to your Tutor and to divers others, and I perceive by her importunity that if I would pay these debts you have now promist a greate amendment and I find you have foold her into a beleefe of it. But Sir let mee tell you . . . as you have left yourselfe and mee for your meane company, soe I can leave you to them without any farther care of you. I will say noe more, but that by your beinge my unworthy sonne, I am made your unhappy father.' Harsh words to address to a lad of twenty, but Sir Edmund seriously considering his son's 'disorders at Oxford' is resolved to make an end of them.

July 12, 1637. Edmund himself writes humbly to his unfailing brother, three months later, to help him out of his evil courses—'unless I leave Oxford, I cannot leave them.' Ralph drafts apologetic letters to the authorities, and the 'fiery Wilkinson' is reminded that under certain conditions 'even James and Apollos' might plant and water in vain.

Sir Edmund had procured the living of Newton Blossomville for Ralph's old tutor, John Crowther, and this worthy now undertakes to bring 'the prodigall' 'on his desserts into the former favour of his father and friends, tis all the thanke I expect or desire. If God crosse us both herein' he trusts his intentions may yet be favourably remembered. Sir Edmund is relieved and comforted : 'I shall not despair but that I may againe love him. Sir I commit him wholly to you. I pray bee careful what acquaintance he makes with any of those greate families about you, for there is dainger for him that is soe apt to these vices.'

July 18, 1637. They start work zealously with Edmund's hearty good will; 'by his owne confession he hath wholly lost all his time at Oxford, and understands not the very first grounds of logicke, or other university learning, and hath noe bookes

to initiate him in it.' Crowther therefore asks Ralph to send him 'those easy logicke notes which I collected for you, to go on with for the present.'

July 23,
1637.

Before a month is out Edmund writes to Ralph: 'Mr. Crowther is extreame ill and I feare past recovery. . . . I had written a letter for him to a Lawyer concerning the making of his will, but Dr. Bates coming put him in soe greate comfort, saying there was no danger of death, and his life for his own, that through that comfort and his wife's entreaty (who causelessly feared the making of his will would hasten his death) the letter was not sent till next morning, before the messenger did returne he was insensible and speechles. By chance on Munday last he entreated me to write a will for him . . . only a cobby to put him in remembrance of the cheife things he intended . . . he endited so fast that . . . I forgot all his relations, he entreated me to write it in Latin because his Wife should not understand it, he hath made yourself and his brother-in-law Mr. Cobige [Thos. Cabbage] the Minister of Ludlow, his overseers. He hath not set his hand to it and to doe it now he is insensible I think wd frustrate his will. If it pleased God to restore him the least time to his sences, I will take witnes of it and get him to set his hand to it. I have shewed it to on Mr. Farrar of Bedford a Lawyer who sayth it will stand, however I have lockt it up safely.'

Aug. 12,
1637.

The wish seems to have been granted. 'A true copy' of the will at Claydon bears date of the following day, with the signature 'J. C.' duly witnessed, and a legacy to Edmund of 40s.

The same kindness and good sense was exerted on the widow's behalf, and she greatly needed help. Edmund writes just after the funeral—'I verily beleevv Mr. Crowther burnt all his dangerous sermons for I can find none but what he preached since he left Oxford; to prevent the worst I have carryed the lykelyest to Mr. Wagar, and if you desire Mr. Aris should peruse some of them I will shortly send them.' A few days later he announces that: 'Mr. Barton a domesticall chaplaine of the Earle of Peterbourough's

Aug. 21,
1637.

Aug. 25,
1637.

succeedes her husband, but useth her not very kindly; for he will not buy anything of her except he hath it at half its worth, and because a neighbour hath bought her corne, he threatens to make him pay use for his barn and to sue him for comming upou his ground when soever he fetcheth it out. I belceve he speekes more than he can doe untill he hath institution and induction.'

After this Edmund spends some months at Hillesden with his grandmother and his uncle Sir Alexander, happy in the quiet country life which brought him back to his better self. Unlike Tom he finds plenty to do, and his letters are full of other people's interests; he is 'much delighted to help the miserable.' He pleads for a poor woman who is 'neere her time,' and desires present relief lest she and her child perish; he intercedes for his sister Susan 'in this her first fault,' who is 'in my parents' disflavour; shame and a kind of amazed fear hath deterred her from so plaine an opening of her misery to them, as she hath done to mee'; and tries to prove that even Tom is 'not so ill as lus own indiscrete discourse argues him.'

Nov. 3,
1638.

Nov. 24,
1638.

Jan. 12,
1639.

Jan. 19,
1639.

When the household is going up to London he begs his father to allow horses for the maids to ride up there, instead of going by the carrier, 'for the very name of a waggon is soe offensive to them.' He has a good word for every one, but his most charming letters are written to Ralph about his baby boy, Edmund's namesake, aged two, who is at Hillesden for his health while parents and grandparents are in London. 'His gummes are soe sore, he will not yet suffer his nurse to looke into his mouth . . . he presented his duty to you as well as he could do it.' 'His teeth have not yet cut flesh which makes him a little froward . . . hee is very lyke his mother . . . hee imparts his affection to me which I am not a little ambitious of.' 'Were I as skillful as *Œdipus* I should be puzzled to say whether I love him or his father best. If it be accounted the cheifest worldly happiness to enjoy a noble and a faythful freind, O then what a heav'nly felicity it is to have a brother that is such a one.' When Mary has a little daughter, Edmund is

'more rapt with the happy tidings . . . than with any felicity that ever befell my own person.'

A welcome opening came that spring, when Sir Edmund Feb. 1639. got his son as a volunteer into the army marching to Scotland, which he himself was to join. The expedition was unpopular from the first. 'None but beggarly slaves follow the Court,' said an old countryman, John Willet, who was 'grossly abusing' the Knight-Marshal; but young Edmund was resolved 'to attempt as much as any in a brave way.' 'Mun carryeth himself very well' his father observes with keen satisfaction.

After the pacification of Berwick, Edmund came south to join the army of the States in Flanders. He visited Hillesden, went over to the Oxford 'Act,' 'for the creating of Doctors,' sought out and settled with his creditors, and left 17s. for 'the tapster at the Greyhound' whom he could not find, after which he felt 'free of all the world,' and so resolved to keep himself. He is in Sir Thomas Culpepper's company, who is indebted to Sir Edmund for past favours. He writes from Flanders to Ralph: 'I shall deferr begging Sept. 10, 1639. of a furr coate . . . because the army is now upon going out of the feild, and I am in a free garrison wher I shall never be put to any watches, but if you find my father willing to part with any of his sutes of cloathes, I pray further him in it, for I shall ever desire to goe as handsomely cladd as I cann possible. I am in a pretty good stock of cloathes allready, soe that now and then a sute from my father will maintaine it at the same height ever, and then I shall think to live as handsomely as any Gentleman in Holland, and I hope my father will still grant me this, because he hath hitherto dealt soe with my brother. My Collonell and I am as greate as two beggars; he is often repeating his deepe obligations to my father, and sure he would never doe it to me unlesse he meant some greate requitall.' Another letter is written from the army 'by Hulst in flaunders.' 'There is a hollands post that goeth Sept. 15, 1639. weekly by whome all letters come very safe.' 'My brother Harry is going over to England. For my part I dare not

Nov. 9,
1639.

soe much as dreame of such a happiness yet, noe, though it be never soe pleasing to me. I have set up a resolution to banish all thoughts of it, till I have either got a fortune [a captaincy], or else am past all hopes of getting any. My Collonel useth me with very greate courtesy and I am confident I shall have at least the second fortune that falls, but I must walke stepp by stepp without any leaping.' 'My Collonell told me at my first comming, that it might ly in his power within a twellmonth to putt me into a partizan or a company . . . I know him soe well by his dealing with all other men that I vow to God I cannot credit his fairest and greatest protestations, for I am sure his greate god, Gold Almighty, is able to make him deceive the best freind he hath in the world.' He has found out the worth of Sir Thomas Culpepper's promises. 'I would desire that my father would take that course with my Collonell that Sir Harry Vane doth. He tells him that what courtesyes or favours he showeth to his sonne he will studdy to requite . . . and hath possest my collonel with such a feare of him, that he hath confess'd to me himself that Sir Harry Vane is not a man to be incens'd. . . . There is noe cvill but one may picke some good out of it, for his sordide and base dissembling makes me more admire the faythfull and reall affection which you have ever expressed to me.'

Dec. 8,
1639.

Nov. 18,
1639.

Edmund went into winter quarters with his troop at Utrecht, and took advantage of the university there to make up for former idleness. 'Since I came to garrison I can tell you joyfully that there hath scarce pass'd a day in which I have not spent 7 or 8 houres at my studdy of French and Latin . . . my frenchman, that was Sir Humphrey Sidenham's man (and since his death, Clerk to the Troop) tells me he will warrant I shall speak it perfectly before we draw into the field, and truely I am confident I shall. I repent me of noething soe much as the bringing over soe few bookes. You have many good latine historyes which I most proeferred, and divers other excellent bookes in your studdy, which I belceve you seldom make use of; if you would be pleased when you heare of any gentlemans comming

over, to put some into his truncke, you would exceedingly oblige me. Think not I pray that I intend to begge them for I knowe they are not thinges to be so easily parted with, all that I desire is that you would be pleased to lend me some.'

Ralph had sent him just before some other books which he wanted—'An Historicall Collection of the most memorable accidents, and tragicall matterres of France,' 'The Historie of Scanderbeg,' and 'Plutarch's lives in French.' He writes again: 'I pray be pleasd to send mee a pocket prayer-book, for here are none to be got.' Without dragging his religion in by the ears in the fashion of Tom, Edmund writes: 'There is one thing I would begge of you to make a guift to mee of, which is Mr. Bolton's workes. Most of them I can name to you, being these: his Walking with God, his Instructions for the comforting of a right afflicted conscyence, and his Four Last Things. These I begge of you, because I would make myself obliged to you for whatsoever good I shall ever be capable of.'

The tender feeling which the young soldier preserves for his home is a great contrast to Henry's indifference to everything but his promotion and position, his pay, his horses, and his outfits—topics which fill his letters *ad nauseam*.

'We heare,' Edmund writes to Ralph, 'that you are likely to have warre with france, tis brave newes, twero sport for us to heare that all the world were in combustion, for then we could not want worke; tis a blessed trade.'

With such prospects Edmund is anxious for 'a rise.' 'I have been a Cornet allready . . . a Lieut.'s place is better by 50%. then an Auncyent's—this will be Hebrew to you.' He desires the post of a certain Lieutenant Flood who is about to be cashiered: 'it is really worth 100%. if my father can get it for that.' The next spring he hopes that the Queen of Bohemia may engage the Rhinegrave to give him a cornetcy of horse, but 'the saddles with other provisions for the place' will cost 150%.

He speaks with affection of 'my Lord Grandeson,' and wishes 'his fortune ten times as much . . . and could rather

Nov. 5,
1639.

Nov. 27,
1639.

Dec. 4,
1639

Feb. 22,
1640.

begge in his service, then serve on good termes with this collonell.' The unpopular commander is likely to be cashiered soon after, and Edmund does 'not care 2*d*. whether ever he sees his face more or noe.' He complains of 'the Dunkerkes and the more cruell enemys the searchers of Gravesend, which had like to have broken up my truncke though sealed by the Custom House.' Letters are to be sent to 'Will Herrings, an English ordinary at Utrecht,' and can be answered in fourteen to twenty days.

March 13,
1640.

'I doe thinke I may doe better in England, a captain's pay being 15*s*. a day besides the allowance of 4 deade payes and his own mens, I am confident a company will be worth 400*l*. a year honestly, and I am noe such ill husband now, but that I could pick out something of it, besides the saving my father his allowance.' 'Your terra-firma never forsakes you, but our fortunes plainely abandon us,' he writes to Ralph; 'your advice was ever good at home . . . pray let me have it . . . I know not well what to doe or to what regiment to betake myselfe.'

March 28,
1640

April 2,
1640.

'Sweete brother, I am most wary in giving my father the least distast and therefore humbly besought him to please himselfe in my disposall . . . I had rather begg here than come for England to a good fortune without his consent.' The young soldier wishes to keep to a higher standard than he sees in those about him. 'I may very well stand 2, 3 or 4 yeare without a colours or a leivetenant's place. And when I have got a leivetenants place, it is not soe good to me by 20*l*. a yeare, ass it is to my Brother harry, or to any other that cares not to make a false muster, for noe Captaine will give any thing extraordinary to a man that will not help him that way, nay A captaine will strive all he can to avoyde the having such an officer, for it may very well be 100*l*. yearly out of his way; but what inconvenience should not a man runne, before he should proesume to commit a sinn which his own conscience convinceth him of, and truely I take a false muster to be noe other, and this I confesse is one greate reason of my desire to come over.'

April 9,
1640.

He had described the indifference of the army to the

political struggles in England, and to everything but the chances of war, in terms that show he was himself well informed.

‘I wonder none of your letters mention news. We are as full here as ever we can hold; for it is credibly reported that there are thirty thousand men raysing in England . . . and that these forces shall goe God knowes whither, for the truth is wee heare noe certainty of that. This is the newes that sounds merrily in our eares. We know that you are to have a parlyament, but we care not to aske whither the payment of shipp money shall continue, or whither monopolyes shall downe, or what lords either spirit-uall or temporall are lyke to be questioned. None of these last trouble our thoughts; but truely wee would gladly be informed of the former; therefore I pray Sir when you write will you please to signify what trueth you know of these forces, or of what continuance they are lyke to be of, and when they set forth. My cousen Tyrville continues very ill and full of payne, and doe but thinke what aggravation the newes of these present stirres are to one of his spirit’ [Edmund has been nursing his cousin for several weeks at The Hague, to his own great inconvenience, but without a complaint], ‘for I dare sweare he longs to be an actor in this comitragedy or tragicomedy, or whatever it proove. His sickness is soe grievous that there is a greate doubt whether he may escape with lyfe or noe.’ ‘Robin Turville, a knowing man and of most undaunted resolution,’ recovered his health and both cousins went to England. After a period of suspense, when Edmund feared that he would be ‘kept at rack and manger when others are high fed,’ he and Turville joined the King’s forces marching against the Scots.

Jan. 28,
1640.

May 27,
1640.

In that disaffected and unfortunate army, Edmund, young as he was, managed his men with considerable tact and success, and won for himself an increasing reputation in the ranks of the young Cavaliers.

CHAPTER VIII.

HENRY THE RACING MAN.

1635-1643.

Born
April 19,
1618.

May 1,
1635.

April 19,
1637.

HENRY, having been intended by his father for a soldier, was early sent to Paris to learn French, by which his English was not improved, and his spelling and diction are a strange jumble. His thoughts wander from his French grammar to the horses and dogs at home. 'Pleade for me in my behalfe to my ffather,' writes the boy of seventeen to his elder brother, 'if I have not write in french so well as he expects, but howsoever I presume a line to testifie some little knowledge in the same, and hope in time to expresse myselfe more radier, as the old proverbe is —il fault du temps pour apprendre—. . . . please to send the doggs by a frenchman that is lately gone over for doggs for my lord. . . . I hope my father will not fail to send them for my lord expects them, with theare names, theare ages, and coulers and markes.' He took part in the war in the Low Countries with the son of his father's friend, Sir Edward Sydenham, his cousins the Turvilles, and a number of other friends and connexions. Horse-racing is his particular delight. He writes to his brother, about his profession: 'I tell you truly I doe not like of it. I wod have you think it is not the firing of the boullots that fears mee at all, but the true reson is that I have alwayes givin myselfe so fer to the sports and plesurs of the wourld that I cannot give my mind to this course of life—but to give my father content and the rest of my frinds, I will tarry this sommer in the contry, for to learne the use of my armes and to knowe the duty of a

soger, that when I come of, it shall bee for my credit and honnor. it shall not be mee that will be judg of it, but my Captaine. If hee say noe, belevet I will not come of; for I had rather louse my life then to come of to bee laught at, or bee slighted by my frindes which I doe think dous love mee. If my father is angry, I knowe hee will spake with you of it, let me intreate you to passify him as well as you can."

He next desires his letters to be sent 'unto Buckelay his Captain's garison. it's a great frontier and wee have hard duty for to doe in the winter. we must wach much and the nights will be very could. I will ask for a fur couth which will doe me great pleasure.' He takes his horse-racing seriously, and talks contemptuously of 'your spruce courtiers, and shuch as think uppon nothing but goeing to playes and in making of visits. I can right you noe nuse but of a horsmache, as is to be run yearely at the Hagge for a cupe of 50 pounds, as every officer gives yearly 20 shillings toewards the bying of it. I hope to winit afore I die myselfe. I have rod but to maches since I saw you, and have won them both, I hope likewise to win the cup for the third.' In another letter to poor Ralph, whom he seems to have considered fair game, whenever he wanted anything that his father could not supply, he asks first for a pad, then for a bit, then for the horse furniture fitting to it, then for a saddle, and, lastly (as in the gradual accretions of the stone-broth), adds 'a horse willbe very wilcom, for sommer drawes on apace, and if I am unmounted I know but wan way I must trust to, which is to march afout. and I am an ill foutman. I would have sent you money to have bought one, had I any to have spared, but seeing I have non, I refer myself holy to your kind nature, and make no dout my desire will be accomplished, cyther uppon credit or gift' . . . 'if I have a horse, twill be to ease my weary limes not try his speede for the cup,' a statement which he thinks may further his request.

'I doe not at all wonder,' wrote Edmund at this time, Dec. 21, 'at brother Henry lyking a souldier's life, sene he can follow that and horse maches too.' 1638.

Oct 1637.

Henry was present at the re-taking of Breda by Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, one of the gallant deeds of the fearful Thirty Years War. In 1625 the Spaniards had reduced the place by famine after a terrible siege of eleven months. There is a magnificent picture bristling with lances, by Velasquez, at Madrid, called 'Las Lansas,' painted to commemorate the surrender of Breda, showing how proud the Spaniards were of the exploit. They were now themselves besieged in the town. Henry writes: 'In our a proches there has bine nothing done cence the taking in of the hornworke, but in count William's a proches wee lost some to hundred men of the choitches, and divers offesers besides, in faling in of the hornworke. After, as thay had sprung there minc and where in the worke thay where beate out of it for want of there seconds comming up which were the Duchthes. This was all the servise that was seene afore the towne that is wourth speking of, but wee lost great store of men that where shot in our a proches by misfortune. The towne is now ours and it was given up the six of October, nue style, and the 10 of the same mounth they [the Spaniards] marcht out of it with wan and fifty flying coulors, and there was not at all gest [guessed] to be a bove sixteene hundred men, straglers and all.'

After the taking of Breda Henry remained in garrison there. He declares that he is 'not yett so absolute a soldiur though I love my profession to dispise and contemne those sports so farr forth as they tende to pleasure and recreation, but to settle my whole intencions that way as formerly I have absolutely left.' Nevertheless he explains: 'I rod a mach of six mile with a Dutchman for 50 pounds and won it, but it was not for myself but for a friend.' He had been begging again for a horse, 'not such a one,' he says ungratefully, 'as my kind aunt Pountne sent me'; he begs for a speedy reply respecting the horse, as 'if not I must make use of a Dutch Dogg.'

That Ralph was no preaching prig, unable to enter into the amusements of his brothers, appears from a good-natured letter to Henry at The Hague. Henry seems to

have been at home for a short time and is anxious to hear of Brackley Races. Ralph gives him details about 'My Lord Carlile's white nagg,' and 'My Lord of Salisburies horse Cricket' and their performances; he tells him to let his friends know who uses him with most courtesy 'that April 1637. they may find some way to thank them for it. I pray brother practise your hand and write often to my father. The dun horse is well of his heeles and is now one of the bravest that ever I beheld. My father intends it for your Coronell. Captain Sydenham hath writ much in your commendation, and for a greater allowance for you.'

Sir Edmund buys him a lieutenancy, and he becomes friendly with his captain, a Vere, and his other officers. He is tolerably satisfied and only desires his friends to send him 'six yards of coarse cloth, and four yards of baize,' to make him a winter suit 'to lie upon the gards.' A recruiting agent had been sent over from his regiment, and he was anxious that a horse should be sent by such an opportunity, and explains how 'the nag's meate by the waye is to be provided for.' 'If you can help him to a man or to,' he adds, 'I pray doe. Bridwell is seldome so empty but they may spare some, and, for his honesty, I'll promise you not to enquier after it, for let him be neer so bigg a rouge the beter. I can no wayes requite you with newse, but I am now in the Hauge and if you have any sut to the Queene of Bohemia you need not doubt to prevayle in it, if you please to command her greatest favourite.'

The widowed Queen of Bohemia, Elizabeth, daughter of James I., had taken refuge with her family in Holland, after having lost both shadow and substance of sovereignty. The 'Rose among the Violets' and 'Queen of Hearts,' as she was called by her many admirers, was kind to both the young Verneys at the Hague.

Lord Craven was her most loyal friend, concerning Feb. 6, whom there is a curious letter from Sir Nathaniel Hobart. 1637. He begins by saying that 'the Spaniard is very angry with his Ma^{ty},' who is expected to assist his nephew, but that the King replied that he would only do as

the King of Spain did for the Emperor. 'In this action the Hollanders and my lord Craven jome. Though I dare not ranke him with kings and princes, yet, trust mee, his bounty may challenge a prime place amongst them. I dare say there are some Itallian princes would shrink at soe great an undertaking, nay, an they should pawne their titles, and spoyle their subjects, they would not bee able to furnish such a summ. Yet what is all this but a small part of those vast treasures left him by his father? And what was hee? *Filius Populi*. What stock had hee to begin withall? A groate;—an excelent pedigree! What saies the court of this man? they laugh at him, and desire things may be reduced to their first principle. Would you have my opinion of him? Truly, his wealth is his greatest enemy, and yet his only frend. It begettis, in his inferiours, a disguise friendship; in his equalls, envy His vanity makes him accessible to the one; the meanness of his birth, person, parts, contemptible to the other; and though in those great ons envy bee the true motive, yet his many follies rendring him obnoxious to a just censure, that passes away unscene. Had fortune conspired with nature and ranked him according to his degree, he might have crept away among the rout, his levities unknowne, or if discovered, they might have procurde him as gay though not soe rich a coate as now he weares. Are you not weary? Truly, I am. The candle bids mee goe to bed; therefore, good night.' . . . Dated 'from my cell in Coven Garden'—Sir Edmund Verney's house.

Feb. 10,
1642.

March 20,
1642.

Henry Verney remained in the service of the States, though not very well satisfied with his position. He writes from the Hague begging Ralph to get his father to buy him a company: it could be had for 700*l*.; 'it is not deare considdering the profett of it.' He envies his brother Edmund, who he hears 'is gon Captain for Ireland, and doe hope a will kill a 100 tyrannical rebels for his part.' Queen Henrietta Maria had gone over to Holland, carrying with her the crown jewels, which she sold to buy munitions of war. Her coming to the Hague, says Henry, 'is expensive to all,' and lessens his chances of getting a captaincy;

for 'here are divers gentlemen of great qualities wch are come over with our queene that stands for the first company that falles of our Platoon . . . and all they can pretend to is hopping to imbrace a fortune by the queene's favour more than for their good service.' Sir Edmund must have been sorely put to it to pay such a large sum for his exacting son, but he promised to do so, and Henry writes very gratefully April 22,
1642. to Ralph for having 'moved his sute.' He hopes for the good offices of the Prince of Orange in the matter, as he writes from Rotterdam: 'When I went to take my leave of his Highness a incouraged mee much' [Henry, like Justice Shallow, uses *a* for *he*] 'in promesing mee to doe for mee: wth all a has given mee an act under his owne hand voluntariley of himselfe to remaine in the Armeey this su^mer; it is a favour, and a great one I can assuer you; I dare sware it is the first a hath given to any of a strange nation in his life . . . in earnest it is a good signe, though a greate charge to mee and my ffather. I have sent to him for a nagg, I hope a will be plesed to send mee wan . . . for I am so lame of my leggs that I cannot march.' A few weeks later he writes to his father full of vexation, having failed of promotion, though three places had fallen vacant: the Queen had recommended May 15,
1642. one man and Lord Goring the two others. He attributes his ill-success to the conduct of Sir Edmund and Ralph in Parliament. 'Now sence this I have bine with Sir Thomas Stafford and . . . intreated him to move the queene to recommend mee to the Prince; a reply'd a durst not, for a sed a was sertaine her Majestie would not be plesed to spake for mee. Wth all like a noble freind as hee conseed a tould mee the reson of it: thinke but of Wickcom and Alsberio and you may both easley find the sence of it; the truth is, I beelive, a has tryed her and was doneyd . . . truley I find by him that I am far more unlikeley of getting a companey then I was the first day a come here.'

Lord Goring writes to Sir Edmund to justify his action in the matter, and begins by saying, 'we have knowne and loved long, and I shall desire you first to reade what I shall

heere lay before you, and afterwards iudge of me as upon dew examination you shall finde cause.' He goes on to say that he had been pledged for many years to the man whom he had recommended, and for the other place, though he had been applied to by men 'of great experience and long service in these countreyes,' he had refused to engage himself: also that Henry had not applied to him 'till many days after y^e prince had bin moved for him and all y^e Towne full of it.' In a later letter Henry refers again to his father and brother's action as affecting his promotion: 'for Wickham and Alisbury stepping in my way, I believe that is noe hindrance, though, indeed, I have bin tould by more than one or teu it has. The opinion, I see, of the great ones most att the Court is that my father and you are all for the Parleyment and not for the King, w^{ch} here I find they take not kindly.'

There was a suggestion that he should join the army in Ireland, but it is evident that Henry had no principle to guide him except his own interest. Eventually, by the advice of his father, he offered to attend the Queen on her return to England.

But in the interval the great Civil War had actually broken out, and the father who had cared so tenderly for his sons' interests would welcome them home no more.

The Queen reached England in Feb. 1643, after a most stormy voyage, and in the same month Henry writes: 'Sir Ed. Siddenham hath got mee to bee Maior of hors to Sr. Ralphe Dutton, his garsson is Sisseter.' He hopes his colonel will help him to raise his company. 'The King's hand I have kist; a lookt earnestly uppon mee, but spake not to mee; in time if the warr goe on I hope to be better knowne to him, if not I shall hardly get my sute granted.'

Surely a cold reception for the King to give to the son of his faithful servant, slain in his service at Edgehill, some four months before, and that son a soldier, who only asked to be allowed to serve him; but Burnet says of Charles that 'he had such an ungracious way of showing favour, that the manner of bestowing it was almost as mortifying as the favour was obliging.'

CHAPTER IX.

SIR EDMUND'S IRISH FRIENDS.

1626-1640.

SIR EDMUND'S connection with his many Irish friends was of old date. In 1626 there is a letter from the 'great Earl of Cork,' commonly so called as if it were part of his title, thanking Sir Edmund for his 'noble carriadge' to his daughter Alice and her husband Lord Barrymore and little son, 'of which I will as I have good cause, reteign a moste thankfull remembrance.' He entreats him to present 'a leash of falcons [3] to his Majestie. They ar the ayry of Smerwick, bred in the veary fort which the Spaniards held . . . till putt to the sword by Lord Arthure Grey, then Lord Deputy of Ireland [1580]. The King's late father of blessed memory vouchsafed yearly to write unto me for these hawkes and did esteem yt a great blessing to have birds of pleasure bred in that rocky fort in which his late sister of famous memory had an army of Spanish enemeyes which came to bereave her of this kingdome lodged. That affection of his late majesty gives me the bowldnes to offer soe poor a present which I praie maie be humbly tentred to his highnes.' He goes on to beg Sir Edmund to try and get certain moneys repaid, advanced by him to make tenable the famous forts of Cork and Waterford. 'The works given ouer for want of money laste year, I, to prevent the further rejoicings of the ill-affected papists (who wrote poorly thereof into forreign kingdomes), have weekly imprested them with my own monies and doe every Saturday pay

them fifty pounds upon account not doubting but in due time these monies and 500*l.* which I lent to supply th' extream necessities of the soldiers his Majesty's fleet landed here shall be repaid me. From Lismoor the xviith of July 1626, your affectionate friend and servant R. Corke.'

Lord Cork married Catherine, daughter of Sir Geoffrey Fenton, Secretary of State for Ireland. Their daughter Lady Alice Boyle married the first Earl of Barrymore; they lived on their estates and did their duty by their surroundings; earnest Protestants of the type of the Verneys, they had sermons for the few Irish Protestants about them at Castle Lyon on Sundays and Wednesdays. Lord Barrymore is called a good and brave man, and was for some time President of Munster. Lady Barrymore seems to have been an Irish woman of the best kind, the most charming type in the world, energetic and capable, very amusing and very loveable. In each of her yearly visits to 'the Bath' and to London, sometimes with her father, sometimes with her husband, Sir Edmund appears as one of the foremost friends on whom she relies for help.

Sir John Leeke, who married Sir Edmund's half-sister Anne Turville, was a retired officer, connected with the Barrymores, from whom he hired a house, and farmed the park at Castle Lyon. His daughter Mary married a Beresford; Anne married Nathaniel Hobart; Bridget married (1) Robert Taylor, (2) Captain Hals, (3) Thomas Badnage; Dorothy died unmarried; they were all extremely Irish, and voluminous correspondents. None of them lose anything for want of asking their English relation at Court, who was required to use his influence for every variety of favour, such as getting a would-be son-in-law made a knight, &c., &c.

Sir Nathaniel Hobart—'sweet Nat,' as he is continually called—was as a brother to Ralph, and he and his wife 'Nan' were much attached to Sir Edmund. In 1630-40 he was a young lawyer, working hard at his profession, living with his family at Highgate in a house which he apparently inherited from his father, Sir Henry Hobart, Chief Justice of Common Pleas.

In 1635 Sir Nathaniel seems to have got into money troubles in the scheme for draining the fens, where he invested his money, probably not very wisely, in a share with Sir Edmund. The 'great level' round the isle of Ely, covered by the overflow of the Ouse, was a dreary swamp in summer and a waste of water in winter. Vermuyden, the famous Dutch engineer, undertook the draining of the Bedford swamps in 1634, under a company with the Earl of Bedford at the head. Sir Nathaniel became liable for his share, which he could not pay, and for some time the young lawyer was in hiding, sometimes in his study under Sir Edmund's roof, where probably the protection of the Knight-Marshal was of use to him. Sir John Leeke,¹ his father-in-law, writes to Sir Edmund: 'I am towld Sir Robert Bell and the fenns have nere drowned him: give yo^r ayd, yo^r cowncell to that Honest sweet man that he may looke uppon poore Nann and his pretty Babes. you have bine a father to all mine. be so still.'

Feb. 4,
1636 ?

Sir John Leeke, writing again to Sir Edmund of poor 'Nat's' share in the company's loss, says: 'I am relieved [? grieved] above all earthly things that have befallen me, my loss of my deare boy excepted, that honest Natt hath not only sould his brave lordship, but that most of the money about the ffens is wasted, and hath and must pay much more for the bewiching Bell and that his liberty is taken from him. He is so loth for to be caught, but it will be hard for him to escape the fowlers that lay lime for him. I know your help and the parliament help may advantage him much but the ende will be most dangerous. I would have him to see us here in Irland as soone as the parliament shall be ended up till some fair composition may be had. I know poor Nan will be loth to have him from her armes but it would break her heart to have him in restraint and I am sure would go near him. Let him adventure a welcome hither, if it be not as hartly as he can expect, let us be blotted out of his remembrance. You know Nan brought him five

¹ Sir John Leeke often dates his letters by the day of the month without the year.

hundred pounds without a jointure or provision. God hath blessed them with many sweet children. I wish they were cared for in some measure. I need not invite your care, I know your wisdom considers for necessity.'

Sir Nathaniel was eventually relieved from his difficulties; he was appointed a Master in Chancery in 1652, and Charles II. reappointed him to his post.

Besides Sir John Leeke's daughters and their husbands, Magdalen Faulkner comes into the story; a niece of old Lady Denton's and a poor cousin of Ralph's, she became a waiting-gentlewoman to Lady Barrymore; her letters from Castle Lyon during the Irish rebellion are very valuable. She afterwards married Mr. Bruce, a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Youghal, connected with 'Mr. Moray of the bedchamber,' who, coming from France, was taken prisoner at Gravesend and closely confined in the Tower for bringing letters from the Queen to Charles.

In May 1631 Lady Barrymore, who had been at Bath with Sir Edmund and his son, writes to him as 'noble governour' from Dublin, saying she had received a letter from him assuring her of what she had never doubted, 'for I knew it was impossible that so ill a thing as forgetfulness should harbour where so many virtues are.' She ends by presenting 'her love and servis to all the good company at Charing Cross and to my noble sarvant Ralph—your assured friend and charge to command.' It is addressed 'to my moch honored frend Sir Edmon Verney Knight. Knight Marshall of England att London.'

Oct. 1,
1635.

Sir J. Leeke writes to Sir Edmund: 'Now that the Deputie hath browght into the King's power 3 Counties and they have submitted themselves to the King's mercy, it is conceyved the Kinge will take the fowerth of each countie. My Lord Clanricard hath most of his lands fallen into the King's mercy. A great plantation wilbe and exclent lande. My lord Clanricard or his soun or my lord Willmote cann best instruct you. Be quicke for many gape after this plantation. Thes lands are in the prvince of Conaught whereof my Lo. Willmote was governer many yeares. If

you may wthout hurte to y^rselfe speake a good worde for me, I shall bless god and you for itt. I have littell hope of the sowre Deputie. I have given 200*l*. for a lease for Capt. Hals [his son-in-law]. We have 36 years to come. The lands is my Lord Barrymore's. I must give him 100*l*. to renue the lease to 51 yeares, out of w^{ch} my Lord Dungarvan will have 50*l*. for you. [Sir Edmund managed for his half-sister Lady Lecke.] But this money must not be had until the capt. come home, who I expect every day. He hopes to bee with us on Michalnas day. God sende him safe, for he hath suffered much in his goinge, a moneth and 5 dayes storme, lost 12 men, and were not in that time able to sett on a kettell, and hadd much of the Beverage staved in, so much that he came to a pint and a haulfe of water a day. I hope his goods will prosper that is gotten wth so much hassard and difficultie.' Later—'It hath pleased God Oct. 29,
1635. through many and many dangers to bring Capt. Hals with his ship and goods safe to port . . . God all powerfull hath effected this match, and I dowght not but that arme will still and ever cover and bless them, for never man I beleve cann more truly love then he.'

Sir Edmund, at Sir John Lecke's desire, thanks Lord Cork for signing some leases of 'divers plowing land,' and for adding twenty-one years without raising one penny rent.

Sir John tries to persuade Sir Edmund to adventure in some of the confiscated lands so much recommended in a former letter, which were to be allotted by Lord Wentworth. 'My Lord of Inceyquin is a fortnight married to my Lord President's delicate dawghter, and to this marriadge this sommer came over the tow dawghters of Sr John Ogle, daintie singers and most exquisite musitians. They are here untill the springe.' To which wedding also came James Dillon, Ralph's great friend. The bridegroom was the first Earl of Inchiquin, and is said to have been 'distinguished for military skill and many soldier-like exploits during the Irish Rebellion.'

Letters seem always sent by hand. Sir John has written to Sir Edmund by a merchant, or by Lord Cork's 'too

younger sonns' who are to be at Eton. 'This I sende by a most deare frende of mine, Mr. John Barry. Had not my lord Barrymore issue male, this gentellman must Inheritt his Honor and Landes. I am confident of noe man's faythfull love to me In this Kingdome but of this man's, yett I must say I have many wellwishers as any poore man hath, but I may truly call this man my frende. He is a man of seaven hundred pounds by yeare and may live happily att home, but his desyeres are to be abroade and in the warres, whether his Intentions now are. If uppon good conditions he may, I am resolved to send Jack Leeke wth him, who will use him as a Brother and will allow him a good meanes. Hee will carry over 1,500 men. My sonn doth begine to be toe sturdie for my government and this must be his way. I hartily desyer you will take Mr. Barry into your love and good opinion, he will deserve itt, a more valiant, honest younge man liveth not. nether is ther a man, I beleeve, that for exercises of the body cann outdoe him about the court. He is a papist, but we have hopes he will be other.' In a later letter he writes: 'For my deare Mustris [Lady Barrymore] you send me most joyfull newes of her comminge for Irland. Itt will make us rich here and your barbarus England poore by her departure, for if you once fall to killinge and beatinge Captains and Leiftennants you will next fall to jniuringe Ladys . . . You will sorrow enough when you goe by the Savoy and find the juells removed and nothing left but beggars and bedds. I desyer, though you be somewhat Lame, you will not take a lodginge ther in your sorrowes.'

Aug. 11,
1638 ?.

Sir John Leeke writes again when the Barrymores are gone on another English visit:—'My deere Mustris hath bestirred hirselle to perfect this [lease from her father]. She is the trewest frende and most constant Lady that ever wore the mark of the Moone. Well may she prosper and inioy what hir brave hart desyres. Sinn were itt she should ever be crossed so much as in hir thought or wishes. See hir, good Sr, and say or doe somethinge that may expresse my thankfullness by you, for shee hath a great oppinion of yo^r

noble respects to hir. You shall likewise find wth her a sister Katherin, my deere cossen, a more brawnie wench or a Braver spiritt you have not often mett wth all. She hath a memory that will hear a sermon and goe home and penn itt after dinner verbatim. I know not how she will appeare in England, but she is most accounted of att Dublin. I am much obliged to hir, and lastly you shall incounter wth a younge peere that stands in feare of you already. She howlds downe hir head a littell and my Mustris tells hir that when you see hir you will not spare to chide hir. I know not how itt goeth, but ther hath bine an overture [of marriage] made for the new Earle of Thomond sonn who you know. I pray doe some good office in itt, if itt come in yo^r way. She is a sweet disposed Lady . . .

'You shall have all thes winter att the Savoy, in S^t Tho. Staffords howse, the greatest familie that willbe in London (I praye god the ould man [Lord Cork] houlds out). . . I often heare of you by my good frendes att Stalbridge [where Lord Cork's youngest son Robert Boyle the philosopher lived]. My Mustris sent me worde that she had receved a letter from you from Barwick, and that you had promised to see Stalbridge. . . . The Lo : Deputies frownes lie very heavily uppon me and consequently not favorable to my daughter in hir busines.'

Capt. Halls had died and Sir John was negotiating the re-marriage of 'Bidde' with Mr. Badnage, one of Lord Cork's gentlemen in waiting, who, he says, came over purposely to gayne his approbation, 'wthout which shee had promised his Lo^{pp} not to marry and he would take itt ill if she showld . . . You shall find him a rationall man . . . Bidde has hir tow maydes, hir man that wayghts upon hir, and hir foote-man and 4 horses. Shee is now worth 2,000 markes, hir debts payd, and hir child well provided for ; so as you may conceyve that she is a mach for a right goodman, and if you were acquainted wth the woman as you are wth the rest you would say that she deserves a good husband for she is right good and worthy . . . We have almost perswaded the Munn to be mayd a k^t for o^r women and

Aug. 18,
1638 ?

Sept. 13,
1638.

good frends here so wish itt for as she was my dawghter beinge the eldest k^t in Irland now knowne and as she was Capt. Hals his wife, who hadd a companie att the Ile of Ree of foote, she had a good place, and now by marieng Mr. Badnage she comes in the reere of all w^{ch} will goe neere to breake all and hee understands itt well himselfe. If itt may be browght to pass in England wee all should be gladd for it will hardly be in Irland if itt concerne any of mine, the great mann's hate to me is so much.' In another letter: 'Truly I finde Bidde's affection well enowgh to the mann were itt nott that hir place must be in the tail of all the country and I beleeve if any thinge hinder itt that wilbe the rubbe, for wee stand heere more uppon place then in England heere are mayny startupps that wealth doth advance from baseness to p^rferment.' The question of precedence seems to have been waived in the end, however, for Bidde shortly after married Mr. Badnage, and he remained unknigh^ted. In another letter to Sir Edmund, Sir John Leeke writes :

'Noble brother, you have now obliged me my poor fortune, wife and children and my ould carcase for sending against yoar will my deare Mustris, the worthiest of woemen. Believe it ould Corke could not begett nothing foolish. I am with all my hart glad we have her, and by this time you find the misse of her for had you had her conversation any wit longer she wou^{ld} have much advantagd you to have bine a Counsellor a Deputie or anything. You say shee is very discreet and of great understanding. By my soule I dare swear itt, for I hadd rather have her judgment in businesse than the greatest concelor amongst us and if I had a desier to be merry, better company is not. If she hath either got Doll or her own more pretious sister Kate, to whom Doll comes short, surely if you shall ever see her you will say that you have seene the unparaleld cossens, but my pretious Katherine is somewhat decayed from the sweetest face I ever saw (and surely I have seene good ones). She is keapte and longe hath bine by the foulest Churle in the world; he hath only one

vertu that he seldom cometh sober to bedd, a true imitation of Sir Rob^t Wroth.'

'For my daughter Hals, considering how protestant husbands goe here and this mann's thrift, the much is good enough, she will live happie for he loves her. I cowl'd wish with all my hart that Doll had such another.'

It is to be feared that after her second marriage Biddle neglected the little Hals boy who was so 'well provided for,' his subsequent career being as tragic as his character was ill-disciplined.

Sir John writes again :

'I am tomorrow going to kiss my Mustris faire hands, once in twenty days I must see her. Mustris is the best chronicle of the court and town of any living that spent no longer time ther than she did. She dashes me over the face with some stories of my youth, but I pass them bye as not remembr^s them. She hath half complained to me and so hath Doll Freako, that they had heard that you were a ready and complete man for the pleasure of ladies, and expected at opportune times to be put to it, but that you had the sciatica and such ill savours about you that Doll yet makes a face at the remembrance. You have deserved ill of them, they speak not a good word of you. At the first coming over you were their discourse especially in my presence, but time has cooled that fancy. Now they talk of Robin Welsh and such gallants, let it not trouble you, it is the way of all flesh, but Mistris will ever in three days vouchsafe to drink to me, as it goes down the meaning I'll not enquire. . . . Your ould Tom is with Mustris and fools every meal with drinking a glass of sack to your health and when he doth pray itt is for you only.'

Lady Barrymore writes from Castle Lyon to her 'Noble Feb. 18, 1639. Sarvant,' Ralph. She has had a 'distillation out of my head, which is fallen into my jaws and teeth,' so that she could not write before, 'to aske the favour of you to rite to my noble governour to find a good tutor for my young master. I would have him a mounsher, one that might teach him to right and a good garb, and that might still be with him when

I send him to school. I would not have him too ould nor too young, but one of a very temprate carrige. For his wages I refer it holey to him for what he agrees for I will God willing see paid. I like him so well for a governer for myself that I humbly desire he may choose one for my mad boy; and that he may come over with as much speed as may be, for he be spoild for want of one.' . . . 'Take order the herings and the vinneger may be sent as sone as you may; remember my Tranchers for now I am in greate neede. Mary Danes goes a munday, if you will anything to Dublin.'

Sir John Leeke, at the same time, says that 'Lady Barrymore hopes you will favour her so much as to send her a cyvill monsiere to breed her son. Mistress ffaulkner and my lady do well fadge [agree] and I believe she doth not repent her coming over for my lady doth much respect her and keepeth all her promises most justly and not without many gifts and expressions. Mistress ffaulkner is very sickly and melancholly, we merrily tell her it is for some love she left behind her.'

Feb. 18,
1639.

Lady Barrymore writes, 'Faulckner vowes you shall not keepe her chees, my Lady Denton sent her but shall have haulfe. At the beginning of April, God willing, my dear Elin and Faulckner with Garrot Meagh shall for England for help for her lameness which grows much upon her. Pray tell my lady so much that I may have her advice for it.'

She writes to Sir Edmund: 'I have sent unto your protection a kinsman of my lord's who I desier you will please to afford the favour that (in the court where his desiers are) Sir Edmon Verney's acquaintance and conversation may give to a stranger. I dare promise he shall endeavour to deserve your favor in all his ways. And soe will ever your charge to command.' She sends a message to 'swete Mrs. Hubbard' that she is her humble servant. 'Faulkner holds down her head and keeps on her gloves worse than I did and that is for your credit.'

Later on, when Ralph has taken side against the Court, Lady Barrymore writes to him: 'Noble Enemy, it is not

one of the leaste of your vertues that you are pleased to caste your eyes from the gallantry of the courte, and the bravery of the citey upon a cuntry lady living in Ireland and convereing with none but masons and carpendors, for I am now finishing a house, so that if my governour [Sir Edmund] please to build a new house, that may be well seated and have a good prospect, I will give him my best advice gratis, for all the quarrell I have to him in letting me be so neare the happinesse of your conversation almost a twelvemonth, and never bringin me to that honor. The maney favors you conferd upon me daley at the Bath makes me the more resent of my misfortune, and be confident nothing can make my pease with you and him butt your promised journey heather, by which meanes I shall obledge the whole kingdome to me . . . and it will make me if it bee possible more your sarvant than now, in which degree you have not a more powerful command over any, than over Your Enemy and friende to surve you.'

In July 1641 Magdalen Faulkner writes: 'You writ to me about strawberry treese which were green all the yeare, but a think you are mistaken in the name of the tree. I believe you mein the cane apel tree, but it tis past the time of the yeare, thay must be set at the beginning of ffbry, there is none of them nere ous but one at my lord of Corke's. I make no doubtt but to get some of the slips and send when the time of year sarves.' . . . 'Sir John Leeke begins to repente his dawghter's marrag and wishes he had loste his hande when he joynd thare's, but kipe this to yourself. Now I knoe you are knited [she is writing to Ralph] I will give you your rite titel but you should a put me out of that dout, and a dun as a knit of our contre did to his frindes in the concluding of his letars, and gave himself the titel of Sir Wilam Manerd, if you would have dun me this favor I should not a robed you of your titel so long.'

The difficulty to a woman of finding an investment for a small sum of money seems to have been immense. Magdalen had been left a hundred pounds by her aunt, Lady Denton, and she had a little money of her own, which

was lent out at interest to farmers at Hillesden. In prospect of her marriage Magdalen was very anxious to get together three hundred pounds, 'as my portion,' and writes to Ralph, in 1642, about calling in the various little sums. [An old French governess of ours had a certain number of hundred francs lent in this way to peasant proprietors ever since the time of her grandfather. She had had no interest for several bad years, and, like Magdalen, had been much put to thereby.]

Dec. 4,
1640

When Strafford's rule in Ireland had come to an end, Sir John Leeke wrote to Sir Edmund: 'I writ this purposely to give you to understand of the petition and remonstrances our Lower House of Parliament submitted to the new Deputie [Wandesford], and that they might be suffered to go into England a selected committee to make good the grievances for we groan insufferably under them. P.S.—I received lately a most kind and courteous letter from my late mistress, the Lady Mary Wrothe. . . . She wrote me word that by my Lord of Pembroke's great mediation the King hath given her son a brave living in Irland. . . . We hear from good mouths that our Lord President must be removed, for which I am sorry heartily, for he is and always hath been my good and noble friend, yet if it please his Majesty to think him fitt for other employment, I then wish with all my hart I had as good a friend in his place. It is worth £1000 per annum from the King, a troop of 50 horse and a company of foot, with some other duties and perquisites it may be worth £2,500 per annum. I could wish you had it, if you could be content to part from the eyes of your master, or think this a better place than the marshal's; it is a thriving place, for our noble president doth thrive exceeding much. But if you shall not hold this a place for your content, then put to all your friends and power for honest Barrymore. Oh it were a blessing and a fortune inexpressible for that same noble lord and his, then might he soone pay his debts and make Castleyon flourish. Receive this from my deare mistress. Lastly from myself I have so much ambition

that I do desire you were the Deputy. Examples have been that in Queen Elisabeth's time some of your rank and some of meaner condition as Sydney, Fitzwilliam, Parrott, Chichester, after a lord, and this Wandesford lately dead. Let Sir Ed. Verney have some ambition to be our governour or our kingdom's governour. I pray take this close to you as things not impossible.'

The misery and destruction of the rebellion of 1641 must have fallen like a thunderbolt on the happy and useful household of the Barrymores. Within a year the country was sacked and ravaged, and the owner and his people alike ruined.

CHAPTER X.

SIR RALPH'S FRIEND—JAMES DILLON.

1631-1650.

THE most intimate of Ralph's Oxford friends was James Dillon, eldest son of Viscount Dillon, afterwards second Earl of Roscommon. He, having been converted from the Roman Catholic faith by Archbishop Usher, sent his son to Oxford for education. Usher recommended him as 'a jewel of price' to the Master of Exeter, who, finding him 'a young man of pregnant parts,' placed him 'under the tuition of the nephew of the great Sir Thomas Bodley.' He became 'a person of several accomplishments, and was afterwards third Earl in his own country,' says Anthony Wood. His mother was a sister of Lord Barrymore, so that the friendship of the two young men was hereditary, and they were at the University together.

James Dillon was continually at Claydon during the years 1631 to 1636, and the side lights in his letters give a pleasant picture of the family life there, the household including the very youthful couple, Ralph and his wife, besides a large detachment of the children, and their cousin Dorothy Leeke. The young Irishman evidently admired her very cordially, and there was more romping and kissing when they met than would be permitted now. In his letters to Ralph little words of recollection and allusions to 'brother Doll' appear, and small presents, a thimble, a comb, &c., are sent from time to time.

His first letter is written from Cloncullan, and shows the difficulty of travel from England to Ireland. He had ridden

post from London to 'Chester water,' there to pick up some little sailing vessel, which might be a week or more on the passage to Dublin if the winds were contrary. He calls Ralph 'dear servant,' the word meaning only friend. Dillon signs himself 'your affectionate mistress,' and always mentions Sir Edmund as his 'grandfather.' These fancy relationships were much the fashion at the time. Sir Edmund directs a letter to his wife as 'my much loving sister Lady Verney at Claydon.' Mrs. Eure addresses her nephew Ralph as 'cousan,' while he and his wife are addressed as 'brother' and 'sistar' outside and inside their letters by Nan Lee and Nan Uvedale, and they return the compliment. Dillon's letter goes on: 'You will expect an account of my journey, and truly whilst it lyeth in me to
 Oct. 21,
 1631.

answere your expectation, I will never deceave you—take one brifely then. Within two or three dayes after coming to the water-side from London, I with many more was entized a shipboarde by a flattering winde, where we were noe sooner in a readinesse, and even uppon the weighing of anchor, then there arose a terrible tempest, the winds blew beyonde measure high, and the rayne fell downe so violently and soe fast as one might have thought the floodgates of Heaven had beene sett wide open. We landed presently and truly 'twas well, for had we stayed aboarde our lives had beene all endangered though within harbor. How soe, doe you demande? I will tell you sir. Our barke was beaten upp to a fulle sea-marke, where she had her bottome stricken out and was unseamed. . . . You see, servant, what a deliverance this was, and how I have been preserved once more (and that peradventure ere you are aware of me) to embrace you really and in your proper person as now I doe in my thoughts, and those ideas of you which doe still accompany your most affectionate and obliged mistress James Dillon.' The letter is addressed 'to my noble freinde Raph Verney Esquire, at Mr. Hubarts house in Channell Rowe, right over agaynst Sir Henry Fines his stayres, deliver these. London.'

In 1633 James Dillon had failed in paying an expected

June 5,
1633.

visit, and Ralph writes to reproach him. He defends himself by saying, 'though you will not invite me any more to Claydon I dare goe thither without any more invitation, and that you shall by the end of the weeke following or beginning of next, see by God's leave. Present my service to my noble Lady Verney, my service to Mrs. Verney, my brother Doll, and the rest.'

June 12,
1633.

After his visit Dillon writes from London to Ralph, but more than half his letter is really addressed 'to the tow sweet soules,' as he generally calls them—Doll Leeke and Mary Verney. Mary, although the mother of a baby born in 1632, to whom Dillon was godfather, was a matron of only seventeen; she and her cousin enclosed in one of Ralph's letters to his friend a folded sheet sealed with two little hearts, and inscribed 'Open not this letter till you all meet,' and 'doe us the favor nott to censur our lines,' in Mary's writing. The paper was blank inside. Dillon replies, 'I have here enclosed the letter from the tow soules that give life to the company wherein they are. Reade it and see what it was they were laching when you writt your last to me, but for the world betray not any secret in it. Uppon Wednesday next with God's leave you shall have me there, till then farewell. I should write to y^r goodly creatures but that Mrs. Hubarts and Mrs. Leake are not mett with to subscribe their names. Meats now at the table, I must end and to it without more words than that I am yours. Mrs. Hubarts has been this weeke sickish, but now . . . has adventured abroad. Tell the tow faire ones from me that I am ashamed to see a letter from them tow wherein there is not one modest word.' He is paying them out for sending him the empty sheet!

July 2,
1633.

Dillon sends 'five little combes' to Claydon, 'whereof there are three intended for my Lady Mother [who seems to have joined in all her children's quips and cranks and merriment], tow for my daughter Verney and my niece Leeke. For these tow there are tow thimbles that the one should not hurt a fine finger by the making of my handkerchiefs, nor the other receive a prick in working of my Lady's buttons. Lett my Lady be tould too, that Mrs.

Hubarts cannot yet fitt her with any good backracke. Meate we cannot see soon at Oxon as I thoughte, for I may not be there this Act [Encænna], for some unexpected occasions defer my going. My humble thanks to my Ladie for all her noble favours. unto the tow sweet soules that are with her, the services of amply yours and theirs,' &c., &c.

The Earl of Cork's second daughter, Lady Sara Boyle, married Robert Baron Digby of Geashill; she was 'as good as she was charming, and her husband was the only son-in-law of Lord Cork's who did not borrow money from him.'¹ James Dillon writes to Ralph: 'That I neyther writt unto you . . . nor have hitherto sent unto Oxforde—wonder not. I have since my comming to towne been soe much a troubled, soe much a perplexed man, as I confess I could not write, nor speake, nor thinke anything but one—and that alas a matter too sorrowfull, too sad for mee to write or speake or thinke of. I have lost the faythfullest shee-freinde (as by letters from my Lord of Corke, I am too well assured) that ever I had or ever looke to meet with. My Lady Digbye's deade; my Lady Digbye's deade: whom neither the teares of her father; nor the sighs of her husband; nor the prayers of the poore; nor the moane of her friends nor (in a worde) the petitions and desires of all that ever knewe or hearde of her could withhold from the jawes of death. By death she is gone into an endless life. But I will now withdrawe myselfe from these thoughts, and compose myselfe the best I can.' Baron Digby was nephew of Digby Earl of Bristol, the ambassador at Madrid in 1623, and a distant cousin of Sir Kenelm's.

Dillon sends Ralph some notes he had made of Archbishop Usher's lectures and of Judge Doddridge's charges, with proper depreciation on the part of the writer; 'how to praise them more then to call them Dillon's and Usher's, I cannot imagin,' replies Ralph courteously.

Betty, Sir Edmund's youngest child, was born on September 12, 1633, and Dillon sends congratulations and his

¹ Mrs. Townshend, of Derry Illaun, Oxford, kindly sent me this information.

July 27,
1633.

service to 'the Ladie Verney the Elder, the yonger the Lady Mairasse of Abingdon; and to the prettie plumpe rogue, my brother,' signing himself 'Gilian Bogland,' the joke of which is lost.

July 28,
1633.

Both Ralph and his father had some intention of buying lands in the confiscated Irish counties, and Lord Roscommon was anxious to forward any business which would help his son's friends. 'I am emboldened,' says Ralph, 'to desier you to inquire how my Lord of Carlile's plantation in Ireland goeth forward. His worship hath not the whole Sheire to himselfe, for one of your welewishers hath a verball graunte of a little share in it. . . . I am easily persuaded that the Deputy (as well for his owne benefit as the King's) would gladly have the plantation in Connaught goe forwards.'

July 31,
1633.

Dillon replies that 'my Lord of Corke' had opposed Lord Carlisle and the Chancellor Loftus: 'thus of all hands they tugged when I came awaye. Since, all theire addresses were made to the King, who has referred all to the Deputy. This I learned within this quarter of an houre from my Lord Wilmot. . . . More cannot be absolutely said ere the Deputy comes to declare himself.' Viscount Wentworth had only lately arrived.

Sept. 18,
1633.

'Can it be a punishment unto me to be with you?' writes Dillon in the autumn. 'Indeed then tis a punishment to be in the company I most affect, I most desire. But enough of this. We too long, and too well (I truste) know one the other to need now of eyther parte the assurance that profession gives. . . . Out of Ireland this I heare that the Deputy doth rather imperiously overtopp both the Earle of Corke and the Lord Chancellor then become of eyther of their factions.' He 'hath warned the countrie, that if men come not to him to compound for defective titles, they must looke for noe plantations which men say are very likely to go forward in Connaught and elsewhere.'

The question of titles to estates in Ireland was an exceedingly thorny one; Charles I., by an Act known as 'the Graces,' had consented to accept the possession of land for

sixty years as a bar to all claims of the Crown. It was one of Wentworth's most high-handed proceedings, that he broke faith with men who failed to show titles by no fault of their own; he wanted money to carry on the King's government, and the proceeds were very large of the compounding which Dillon here mentions; the Deputy believed it to be for the advantage of the country that the turbulent lords should hold their lands by English tenure, instead of retaining that tribal ownership which has been the source of so much evil in Ireland.

Ralph writes to Dillon: 'I chanced to cast my eie upon Oct. 13,
1633. Sir Walter Raleigh's instructions that there is nothinge more becominge a wise man then to make choise of freinds, for by them a man shall bee judged what hee is . . . Your brother Doll feares you will never leave your wild uncivill tricks, shee complaineth to mee every time I kisse her how you galled her lipps. I am sure I have had the greatest Losse, for where I have one Busse of her lipps,' etc. etc.

Dillon replies: 'I have the greatest desire that may be Oct. 15
1633. to followe the wise instruction of Sir Walter Raleigh; but if . . . I looke for vertue in my friends as well as wisdome, ware being discarded.' 'Sir W. Parsons in the name of the Oct. 26,
1633. co. Wicklow hath submitted himself unto the Deputie, and hath now . . . referred all to him; present my service to my brother Doll unto whom I have sent a dozen of gloves enclosed in paper that is directed unto you, ten of them were I confesse long since due unto her, the other tow I pray you tell that I meane to make her deserve when I meet her next. farewell Sir. He ends who without end will be yours, J. Dillon.' The information about Parsons was Oct. 30,
1633. 'from Lewis, Lord Carlisle's agent,' but 'letters out of Ireland contradict one the other, nay from one and the same man'; on which Sir Ralph remarks: 'There is noe word or Dec. 29,
1633 action but may bee taken with 2 hands; either with the right hand of favourable construction or the sinister interpretation of suspicion.' Dillon was attached soon after to the service of the Lord Deputy, and constantly attended him wherever he went, whether in Ireland, Scotland, or England.

He was staying with Lord Wentworth in London, February 1634, when Ralph wrote to inquire concerning the frightful sentence just pronounced by the Star Chamber on Prynne:

Feb. 22,
1634.

'Wee country clowns heare various reports of Mr. Prinn's censure. Some say hee is to loose his hand and eares, others his hand only; a third sort there are that say neither hand nor eares, but hee must pay 6,000*l*, and endure ppetuall imprisonment. I know none can relate the truth of this better than yourselfe, for you love not pleasing amatory dreames in a morninge slumber, nor lazie streachings on a downie bed; noe, your spirit scornes such soft contentments. I dare say you rise early every Starr Chamber day to heare the sage censures of the grave counsellours; to you therfore I fly for information.'

Feb. 26,
1634.

Dillon replies that Prynne was 'to be degraded in the Universitie, disbarred at the Innes of Court, he was fined . . . I believe it was in 4,000*l*. that most of the Lords did agree. He was withall condemned to the losse of his eares, whereof he is to parte with one at Westminster, with the other at Cheapside, where, whilst an officer dooth execution on himself, the hangman is to doe it on his booke and burne it before his face. He is to suffer perpetuall imprisonment. . . . There were of the Lords that counted this not enough. . . . His booke was, you may remember, against playes, whercupon the Archbishop of Canterbury tooke occasion to saye, that though he was noe enemy to the lawfull use of them, yet he was never at any in his life, howbeit others of his coate could gett under the dropps of waxed candle at a play, to be observed there, therefore counted noe Puritans. There were other observable things, but these . . . suffice to exceed the just measure of a letter, which (if Seneca be to be credited), should be perspicuous and short.' The absence of sympathy for Prynne in the nation at the first condemnation was most striking, but as he passed to the place where a further sentence was to be executed three years after, the street was strewed with flowers and the words he uttered from the pillory were loudly cheered. Laud remarked that 'there was such a roaring in the crowd as

if each had lost an ear.' Almost the first act of the Long Parliament was to restore him and his fellow-sufferers to liberty.

The absence of comment on news is remarkable in the letters at this time; facts alone are thought worthy of the dignity of letter-writing; opinions are irrelevant, perhaps unsafe. 'The towne heardly did ever more abound with March 19, 1634.
newes,' Dillon writes, 'then now it doeth. It sayes that Wallesteine, by command from the Emperor, is murdered in Germany; that the great Turke sends forth his edicts through the worlde to call the Jewes backe to thaire Palestine, and the building of thaire new Jerusalem; that the French fleet and the Duch are both uppon the coast of England; that the King of France is by the Duch and French proclaymed King of the narrowe Seas . . . and here is the King looked for tomorrowe. This I thinke is enough for me to write in one letter, and ennough for you to beleieve at one tyme. . . .'

Hearing that Ralph has had a bad fall, Dillon sends a April 28, 1634.
messenger on purpose from London to inquire after his welfare: 'Write not back from another's penn, I shall desire your answer, if he lives in whoes blessings or sufferings I share, you are the man.'

Sir Ralph is equal to the occasion: 'To put off those duties April 30, 1634.
which I owe to my freindes under pretence of weakness of body, or urgent affaires, to me is most hatefull . . . shall I suffer another to execute your commands? Noe sir—tis the pleasure I am most pleased with . . . my very penn will cast noeinke unless I write. If you are well, I am well, take this for a truth and me for yr servant.'

In June Dillon is leaving town. 'Dear Sr I am in hast; June 8, 1634.
in extreame hast, and readie to take horse; yet before I goe, I must lett you knowe that I am infinitely thine. . . . Present my service to every one in Claydon, the boyes porter the kitchen boyes and the rest. Farewell, my heart, soo soone as I come backe I will see you.'

Ralph writes later: 'There is noe newes of anything Nov. 1634
that concernes us, but that our old friend, my Lord Russell

[son of the fourth Earl of Bedford] is newly come out of France, and in my judgment much betterd by his travels.'

Sept. 8,
1634.

In the spring Ralph has sat three times to Jansen, as the friends have agreed to exchange portraits; he would willingly despatch the picture, 'but I must first be informed by what way, for such a rare jewell deserves to be carried with much care; my hart, farewell.' Dillon sends his portrait (now, alas, missing) to Claydon, but is doubtful whether he can come himself; Ralph replies, 'The expectation of a misery before it falls makes a man miserable, put me out of my paine quickly, let me know what I must trust to. I had rather be knockt down with a bullet than languish in a consumption.'

May 1635.

Dillon writes from Dublin: 'I have a letter from your father which tould me of a little gentleman [the picture of Ralph] whom I extreameley desire to see. He is like you I presume and therefore I would not have him adventured over hither, before you heare againe.' He recommends the purchase of land, about a hundred miles from Dublin; adding that their old friend the Earl of Sussex 'is the prime man of the Radcliffes, and one unto whom our Sir George here is a kinsman [the secretary and right hand of Lord Wentworth, and therefore an important man to influence]. You are an understanding man and therefore of this I shall need to saye noe more.'

'For my Lord of Sussex,' replies Ralph, 'I must tell you he is old, and his estate soe low, that few of his kindred can gaine anything by his death, and therefore I conceive he cannot do much with Sir George; besides all this, hee is under a cloud at Court, that I may use your own language.'

June 12,
1635.

Dillon repeats the details of the Irish scheme. 'For the rents thereabouts, my father who very well knowes it, because of his management of my Lorde Folliott's estate [brother-in-law of Dillon's stepmother], sayes that they are noe more uncertayne there than in other parts of the kingdom.' The plantation of Connaught goes on. 'I have written to your father and my Grandfather largely of it, I will only add that my father knowes me a much obliged

man to my grandfather there and thee. If he will ingage my father to serve him let him do what he thinks fitt. I assure you I thinke of the Marshall's sending to my father, not out of any fond humor, because of his nereness to me; but merely and solely and totally because (I will conceale noe thought of mine from thee), I beleeve he cannot have in the kingdom a fitter instrument to further his business. He has a hande in the ordering of it himself, he is one in the good opinion of Sir George Radcliffe and the Deputie: he goes the progress with him . . . he is one in a worde, faythful in what he undertakes and true to all trusts reposed in him' [a pretty tribute from a man's own son].

Sir Edmund replies from Theobalds: 'My deare Grand-
child, I cannot expresse the obligation I have to you for your
continuall care of mee and I shall presently follow your
advise . . . the businesse of the plantation has seemed
here to goe slowly on; but I feare it hath appeared soe to
keepe off Sutors: I shall now put it home; and then I
shall trouble you with what I have donne; your commands
to your freends heere I shall obay; but as yet I have seen
none of them . . . I am in such huntinge hast that I will
trouble you with nothinge of newes.'

June 29,
1635.

The next year there were rumours of Dillon's marriage, and Ralph writes to inquire about it. Dillon replies: 'I was towards noe marriadge nor crossed in any, nor by any bodie that came out of England. My Lorde Deputie goes shortly into England & it may be then a good tyme for my grandfather to order things concerning his business. I presume I shall over with him, & give you an account of all that may be looked for from hence. I am very full of many things.'

March 7,
1636.

In Ralph's reply there is some trace of anger at the idea of Dillon's marriage. He was very fond of his cousin Doll, and perhaps felt that Dillon had been playing with her. 'I am glad to heare that those reports concerninge
your marriage are untrue. I hope the first inventors of
them will suffer by the ill tongues of others, as you did by

April 1,
1636.

thers. If my Lord Deputies cominge into England may bee a cause to draw you hither, the sooner hee comes the welcomer hee shall bee to mee, though I confesse I know but few that are fond of his presence. I am now goinge to meete some of my neighbours a Duck Huntinge, I am told they have exelent Doggs. therefore excuse my hast.'

July 12,
1636.

The allusion to Wentworth's unpopularity came at an awkward moment, for Dillon was on the point of engaging himself to the Lord Lieutenant's sister, Elizabeth Wentworth. He confesses that there is a lady in question, and says that he is coming to Claydon 'with the leave of God on Tuesday'; he cannot come before as the Lord Deputy 'goes on Saturday to Court and I must attend him thither, because he takes his leave there uppon Sunday & sees the court noe more until the King comes to Rufforde. I shall tell you stories when we meet; you shall then heare that I am indeed towards a mistress, & you shall ever finde that I am wholly & faythfully yours. My blessing & service to Mrs. Anna Maria,' his little god-daughter.

He writes again from Windsor to Ralph, who had proposed what seems to have been an annual visit of the two friends to Mr. Pulteney and Sir William Uvedale. 'The Deputy goes into Yorkshire and sayes I must kill a buck with him there this summer. Yet must I vehemently desire to see you.' Although Ralph will not be at home he will make a journey to Claydon and will come again later to see him. 'But I leave (under the rose be it spoken) a great pledg of my returne into these partes—my mistress not farr from London; & if I cannot wayte uppon you before I goe into the north, within some moneth after I shall come back, perhaps of a good errand & in my way take you—my duty to my noble grandfather, my service to my Ladie Denton; my Ladie Verney; my Gossip; my sweete brother; Mistress Anna Maria.' Ten days after he says, 'My dear Heart, I went not to Claydon. I stayed uppon another design here. To avoyde this northern journey I have don it. . . . Say therefore by the next returne of the carrier when you will be home & thither I goe. I goe post

Stonie Stratforde way, I shall be with my mistress at Hacney.' 'My Lord Deputy is now going away, this night ^{Aug. 3,} I attend *him* & the next week *you*. I sett no day because ^{1636.} I will break none, for tow days you shall do what you will with me.'

Ralph writes: 'I wish your occasions would give you leave to go to Sir W. Uvedales with me, we would come back before the King comes to Woodstock. But I recant this wish, for I know there is one at Hackney that would wish mee hang'd if I should prevaile. I had rather goe aloane, then run the hazard to lose her favour, who though unknown to me, yet as she is yours, I must serve.'

Lord Wentworth in London writes to his wife at Dublin: 'It is likely to be a match between Mr. Dillon and my sister, so now I send to my Lord Justice to perfect that which is to be done in Dublin [about some land of Lord Dillon's], and that returned I shall give them leave to proceed as shall please God and themselves.'

In September Dillon is staying with Elizabeth Wentworth at Hackney, and writes: 'What might concerne in Ireland y^e affaire that here I attend is allreadie dispatched. There remaynes now nothing but to consummate it, which my mistress & I doe intend on Tuesday come three weeks at Lowton Hall, in Essex. We shall both be gladd of the honner of your presence at that tyme. . . . I am not now to tell you how much I vallew you, or what my desires are to serve you.' There was one more visit to Claydon, which must have been uncomfortable for all parties, and for which Ralph thanks him rather stiffly when it is over.

In 1636 the posts to London had been interrupted by the plague which was raging there as early as June, and Ralph gives the failure of the carriers as an excuse for not having written. He accepts the invitation to the marriage. 'I am now at Highgate where I desier to bee informd how ^{Oct. 18,} you doe, how you are. To-morrow I intend to visite my ^{1636.} friends at Giddy Hall, & if you resolve to make Tuesday next your happy day I'll wait on you at Lowton Hall on Saturday or Monday, & if you please to send me word

where you shall bee this weeke I will attend you sooner though it be but for an hower, for twill bee very hard for mee, to bee five or six dayes soe neere you & not to see you.'

Oct. 22,
1636.

'Dear Sir,' wrote James from Hackney, 'my day holds. Tomorrow I must to Croydon to wayte on my Lorde Deputie; he is there. I am assured of it by Sir George Radcliffe who brought along with him yesterday the letter from my Lord Deputie, which you may remember was wished for. Perhaps we may meet with both on Tuesday.' In Ralph's report of the debate on Wentworth's misdeeds, by that time Earl of Strafford, one article of the impeachment concerns 'my lord Dillons land.' Some arrangement had evidently been made in view of the marriage.

There are no more particulars concerning the wedding, at which Lord Wentworth himself was present, but a month or so after, Dillon writes to Ralph from London, hoping to see him there. There is, however, a chill in the tone; the Strafford connexion naturally began to estrange him from his old friends.

Dec. 1636.

'I thanke you for the honor you did me at Loughton Hall. My wife and I are now in Coven-garden; where we finde the want of you and y^r familie. We hope to see you here as soone as the holydayes are over, for we presume you apt to doe the towne an honor and us a favor. . . . My wife will have her service remembered to you; there is else noe Peace to be hoped for with her. She's angry because your wife has not had the first tender of her respects; she sayes that shee would well have me for to knowe that Ladies should have homages donne to them ere men were thought of.' There is one more sending of affectionate messages to 'my noble grandfather, y^r Ladie and my Gossip; my brother and the rest.' There was still this half remembrance of poor Doll.

Jan. 9,
1637.

James writes once again before he starts for Ireland, hoping that Ralph is coming up to Covent Garden. . . . 'My wife will be your servant in despiight of my teeth she sayes. Faythful Fortescue will serve you too if you will command him hec swears.'

The plague, however, was again raging in London, the Court had been driven away by the fear of it; and Ralph replies from Claydon, 'The unconstance of this wandring sickness hath filled us with soe much distraction that though I heare it decreased a little this weeke, yet wee cannot absolutely resolve to doe what wee most desier. I dare say there are few in this family that thinke it lesse then a second plague to bee kept from waitinge uppon your vertuous Lady, whose goodnesse I hope will alwaies honour mee with the title of her most humble servant.'

Jan. 14,
1637.

And so ends the correspondence. There is a great deal of human nature in the world of these old letters, and it would be strange if the brilliant young Irishman did not leave a sore heart behind him in the breast of the girl whom he had toyed with so affectionately, to say the least of it, for three or four years. Nothing further appears in the letters, but some years later 'the prettie plumpe rogue,' as he calls her, sends her 'humbell service to her unkeell Edmund,' and says, 'he may rather style me his lean cozen than his fatt.' Her father, Sir John Leeke, lost home and fortune in the Irish Rebellion. Sir Edmund was in great money difficulties, and Doll became a waiting gentlewoman, treated however as one of the family, to Lady Sydenham, who was about the Court with her husband. They all three accompanied the King to York before the raising of the standard at Nottingham, and their letters are very interesting. Dillon and his wife returned of course to Ireland, where he was in constant attendance on Lord Strafford, who often alludes to his sister's presence with him in his letters to his own wife. Dillon was cut off from the Verneys by all his new political and social interests. His father was apparently much trusted by Lord Strafford, for the latter, when writing to his wife after his impeachment, says: 'Sweet Heart, I never pitied you so much as I do now, for in the death of that great person, the Deputy, you have lost the principall friend you had there.' He still does not believe in more than the death of his office. 'Yet I trust Lord Dillon will supply

unto you in part that great loss, till it please God to bring us together again'—that 'again' which never was to come to pass for husband and wife in this world.

Of all the breaking of old ties which these troubled times brought, few can have been more bitter than that James Dillon should see his best beloved friend amongst those who condemned his wife's brother to death, and brought his own career under Lord Strafford to an end. Ralph in his heart may have reproached James Dillon with inconstancy, but on the other side that black scaffold on Tower Hill must for ever have stood between Elizabeth Dillon and Ralph Verney. They never met again, but in 1642 'Sir James Dillon,' soon to be Earl of Roscommon, sent a kindly message of remembrance to Ralph from Dublin through his brother Edmund. In 1647 he was at Chester, a hostage to the Parliament, and when Ralph was in exile and both families were plunged in a common sorrow, he came to see Mary Verney in London. He was in Paris after the death of the King, and Sir Richard Hastings, a mutual friend, writes to Sir Ralph at Blois: 'Sir, if you have not hard itt, the Earle of Roscommon is dead, whoe visitinge some of his frends in a compliment avoyded the light of a candell, ran hastily to the chamber doore, fell downe a greate paire of staires, which caused his death.' The outer door of a suite of rooms, in an old French town-house, usually opens on to the slippery oak stairs, with a very narrow landing; hence probably the accident, at once so commonplace and so tragic, which closed the career of this gifted and fascinating Irishman.

March 23,
1650.

He left a charming and sensitive boy, Wentworth, who was then at Caen; it was said that at the time of this accident he had 'an extravagant fit, jumping strangely over chairs and tables, and crying out my father is dead.' He maintained the chivalrous traditions of his race as a soldier and a poet. Pure in a corrupt age—

'in all Charles' days
Roscommon only, boasts unspotted bays.'

Ralph's old affection stirred within him at the news of his friend's death: 'I am infinitely sorry for the sad mis-^{March 27,} fortune that befell my L^d Roscommon, hee was very unhappy^{1650.} in this world, but I am confident his afflictions heere are now recompensed with the joyes of Heaven, w^{ch} is a greate comfort to all that knew him, but espetially to myselve, for non loved him better.'

Clough compares such separations to ships at sea, lying side by side, 'When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,' and at morn they are long leagues apart.

To veer, how vain ! On, onward strain,
 Brave barks ! In light, in darkness, too,
 Through winds and tides one compass guides—
 To that, and your own selves, be true.

But, O blithe breeze ! and, O great seas,
 Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
 On your wide plain they join again,
 Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
 One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
 O bounding breeze, O rushing seas !
 At last, at last, unite them there !

CHAPTER XI.

THE LEES OF DITCHLEY AND LADY SUSSEX, 'OLD MEN'S WIFE.'

1631-1646.

THE Lees of Ditchley in Oxfordshire, some twenty-five miles from Claydon, were hereditary friends of the Verneys. Each successive Sir Harry during five generations, for they were a shortlived race, depended upon Sir Edmund and Sir Ralph to be trustees, guardians, godfathers, executors, friends and advisers in general, to themselves, and their widows and orphans; the amount of business for this one family thus entailed upon Sir Ralph throughout his long life was enormous.

The name of Sir Harry Lee is well known to the readers of 'Woodstock.' It is idle to expect correct historical details in a novel, but Sir Walter Scott has made a curious medley between the later Lees, young men of somewhat puritanic and parliamentary principles really living at the time of the Restoration, and the 'loyal Lee' of strict monarchical and Church views, Champion to Queen Elizabeth, who died forty years before.

He was succeeded by his cousin, another Sir Harry Lee, the first baronet, who married 'Elenor Wortley out of Yorkshire,' and Sir Edmund Verney was warmly attached to both husband and wife, to each of whom he was trustee. Elenor's many marriages—with Sir Harry Lee and with three Earls in succession, of Sussex, Warwick, and Manchester—gained for her in Sir Ralph's cipher correspondence the title of 'Old Men's Wife.' Sir Harry died in 1631, and the

widow married two years after 'the prime man of the Radcliffes,' as Dillon calls him, sixth Earl of Sussex, a somewhat infirm old man.

Sir Edmund was again trustee for her marriage settlements, and had to look after her very miscellaneous possessions, 'the picture case sett with dyamonds, the gold watch sett with Turkies, the pair of bell pendants with dyamonds, the silver warming panne, and chafing dish, the posnett, porringers, two cannes, the bason and ewer, and Spanish pott all of silver, the houschold stuffe, black wrought bedd, and sixteene horses and mares for draught etc.' 'My lorde's plat,' she says ungratefully, 'not much, in his own inventory but 179*l*.'

Lady Sussex was an energetic, active woman with strong puritanic and parliamentary tendencies, and no love either for Charles or his queen. She was very much younger than her husband, and though 'the sade retired life' which she led with him at Gorhambury was not much to her taste, she did her duty to 'my old Lorde,' for whom Sir Ralph sends down 'chise' at different times, 'which is so very good that I am very sori i can ate non of it,' says his wife.

She was a voluminous correspondent, and consulted Sir Ralph and his father upon everything. She trusted to them to make the arrangements concerning her will, to give orders for carpets and curtains, and even gowns; to find a husband for 'Nan,' and to Ralph to send her parliamentary and Court news, whenever his father was too busy; 'as i thinke you the best of men, so the best frinde I have next your good father and mother.' She was godmother to Ralph's eldest son, Edmund, and on the birth of his daughter, Margaret, she wrote: 'Non Jan. 1639. was more glader than myselfe to hear of your wife's safe delivery and that you have so brave a swite baby, which i pray god may live longe to bee a comfort to you both; my prayes for my swite godsone is that he may make as discrete and good a man as his father, and then i am suer he will give joy enofe to his frindes. i must ever chalenge an intrist in him, for belive me i love and wish as much good to

you and yours as any can doo . . . i was telling your father how happy he was in you, and he sade he was so indede for no man hade a better childe, and many more good wordes he sade of you, which plesed mee very much to know you was uppon so dear and kainde termes, . . . you must remember me affecynat to your wife whom i love as much as your selfe ; when you are both wery of london i beecch you com to this doll plac ; for you made me so happy in your companeyes the litil time i hade you hear, that i must bege of you to lett me have it this somer for a longer time.'

May 1639. Sir Harry Lee, Lady Sussex's only son by her first marriage, was not on good terms with his mother. He had been annoyed at her second marriage, perhaps at the large jointure of 3,000*l.* which she carried out of the family, and Lady Sussex writes of her daughter-in-law's relations, the St. Johns, with great bitterness. Sir Harry Lee joined the King's army at York. Lady Sussex writes sadly that she had not seen him before he went ; 'he promisede to come this way as he went north, but he has faled me' ; she sends her letters to him through Sir Edmund. He returned from the army, ill, to his house at Chelsea ; his mother is 'expecting much compiny, my Lady May and Mrs. Garmen [Jermyn, whose husband was afterwards engaged in the Army Plot], and my sister Crofts, and my stable i doubt will bee more then full with ther horses ; I belive the will stay a wike with me. My sone fill ill of the smale poxe the day after he cam home, and is very full of them. The begine to drye and the fisysions sath he is, thinkes bee to god, past all danger, he will not let his wif com near him. onist Cary is a bout him. He was extremly ill before the cam forth.'

July 23,
1639.

Sir Ralph had meantime been writing to Lady Lee. 'Sweet Maddame, I heard a rumour of your husband's sicknesse . . . and though the same letter told me the physitions were confident hee was past dainger, yet I shall not bee satisfied untill I heare it confirmed by yourselfe, for when my freinds are ill my feares I confesse overcome my hopes of their recovery, and hee is on that I soc much affect that I cannot but suffer with him.'

A day or two after comes a hurried scrawl from Lady Sussex: 'I cannot say much, my hart being fuller of sory ^{July 25,} 1639. then i can expres to you for my dear childe. The sent me worde he was past all danger, and now the tell me he is dede. I besech you sende this lettir to your father as sone as you can, and if your ocaseon cannot let you com to me now, i shall right very shorly to you agane.' . . . 'I pray god send your father safe and sone home'; he was still with the King in Scotland.

The loss of her son affected Lady Sussex a good deal, and she must have been pained at his will, which laid open to the world the breach that existed between them. 'This ^{July 27,} 1639. day,' writes Ralph to his father, 'I was sent for to Chelsey to the openinge of poor Harry Lee's will, and the deed of trust.' 'My Lady Lee is his sole executrix, and she is to have the wardship of the heir, but if she die or marry [he remembered his mother's example], what is left to her is to be for the ward.'

Then follow the details of bequests to the two sons and a daughter: 'My Lady Sussex is not so much as named . . . which I am hartily sorry for as I know it will trouble her extreamly.' Sir Edmund was named trustee with 'Pickering and Cary,' but does not seem to have accepted the trust. In spite of the will, Sir Harry's widow, daughter and heiress of Sir John St. John of Lydyard, married Lord Wilmot in 1644, 'much concerned in the escape of Prince Charles from England'; he was afterwards created Earl of Rochester, and was father of the famous wit and poet. Sir Harry Lee's two sons succeeded one another: the eldest married Anne Danvers of Cornbury, another heiress, and he and his wife died within four months of each other in 1659, leaving two orphan daughters, wards of Sir Ralph's: Eleanor, married to Lord Abingdon, and Anne, to Thomas Wharton of Winchendon, Bucks, afterwards Marquis of Wharton.

Sir Francis Henry Lee succeeded his brother in 1659; he married Elizabeth, only daughter of Sir Thomas Pope, second Earl of Downe. Lady Elizabeth afterwards became the third wife of Robert, Earl of Lindsey, grandson of the Earl

of Lindsey who, in command of a division of the army at Edgehill, was killed with Sir Edmundo Verney. Sir Ralph was very intimate with Lady Lindsey, who used to write him long letters from Whitehall, almost as involved and exacting as those of the grandmother of the race, Lady Sussex. There is an oval picture of her at Claydon.

Her eldest son, Sir Edward Lee, was created Earl of Lichfield in 1674, and married, at the age of sixteen, to Charlotte Fitzroy (King Charles's daughter by the Duchess of Cleveland), aged fourteen. It was a very happy marriage, little as this could be expected, and Sir Ralph was godfather to more than one of their twelve children: '1690 Countesse of Lichfield delivered of a son—Gossips Duke of Southampton, Sir Ralph Verney and y^e Lady St. John,' the great-aunt. The King himself was godfather to the preceding child. Lady Elizabeth's second son, Francis Henry, was a gentleman commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, which her family had founded.

But to return to Lady Sussex, the most important of the Lees to the Verneys. She had an unmarried daughter Anne Lee, who was very intimate with both Ralph and his wife; she writes on fine paper, tied up with blue floss silk, a number of extremely missish letters, quizzing the young gentlemen staying at her mother's, or riding down there. Each has his nickname. 'Boutared Eggs' is one of them, 'who catches it' from her according to the fashion not unknown to the young ladies of the present age. Another time she writes about a paste for making the hands white, the receipt for which is to be kept a dead secret. After expressing many regrets to Lady Verney, who had been staying at Gorham-bury, for 'the loss of her sweet companie,' she writes: 'I spend my time most in excesing my fingers on the getar. When we parted we promised to right no complymentes, wich I am very glad of for I am very dall and can write no golden wordes. I am very sory that your finger is ill; the fines thing that can be my cosen baron sayth is poset curd with red rose lefes boyled in the milke and torned with ale.'

The danger from smallpox is terrible; Anne sickens with it, but her mother hopes 'she will not have much disfigure.'

When Sir Ralph and his wife are driven away to France, 'Mistress' Anne loses her 'playfellows,' as she calls them, and does her utmost to persuade her mother to take a trip to Blois. She writes to Ralph: 'Sweet brother a shure yourself that thare is no time that geves so much plesuer to mee as when my thoughts ar on you and my deere sistar; and I wish it ware in my power to testifi the truth by any surves that I might done you in this place. The continuance of these sude times ads much to my unhapynes in that they will keepe mee so long from seeing you, and to dele freely with you I think my lady is resolved not to store. You know hur old umor, wich I presume she will contineu constant to—y^t I belev nothing could prevale more with hur to com In to those partes then your good compyny.'

Both Sir Ralph and his father were appealed to by Lady Sussex again and again about 'maches' for Nan. The son of Sir Thomas Middleton was a suitor, 'on of the best maches in inglande that is to be hade,' but the portion demanded is too great for them she fears. 'The estate lies on the edge of Wales, the grandfather was a merchant, and the grandmother a Dutchwoman; they bred the young man up at home, his mother being very tender of him; his father seems to be a good soledc man, very harty for the Parliament. The sone is littell, hath wite enofe, I belife, a littell refining woulde make him very pasable.' The negotiation, however, comes to nothing; Nan continued unmarried for several years, and appears later as the wife of Mr. Berkeley, afterwards Lord Fitz-Hardingc.

Ralph announces another marriage: 'Newes there is Sept 1639 none, yet I cannot but tell you that Mrs. Cary was this morning made Mrs. Herbert. I wish her as much comfort as I shall receive by our coming to Gorambery next weeke.'

¹ Margaret, daughter of Sir T. Smith, Master of the Requests, an old friend of Sir Edmund's, married first Thomas Cary, second son of the Earl of Monmouth; secondly, Sir Edward Herbert, the Attorney-General.

Lady Sussex replies: 'i am glade he hath made a good chose; it hath beene longe spoken of, but she woulde not acknowledge it to me. he is rich and full and she is a fine lady, and well knowes how to manage a good fortune. this is all i have to say now.'

Oct. 22,
1642.

Lady Sussex was apparently not of an easy temper. Her mother had married the first Earl of Devonshire as his second wife. After Lady Devonshire's death at Latimer, she and her brother quarrelled fiercely about the will. She writes to Ralph: 'My brother ned is a woful man to have to do with, so furious, and everything must be as he list.' In another letter she says: 'My brother and i have hade many disputes since you was hear of thos littell poore thinges my lady gave me: let me intret the favour of you to axe some lawer whether the givinge me all in hur boxes and cabbenets only money exceptede whether i am not to have the golde. So for hur boxes, ther is in on boxe very fine sheets, i hear att lattimers, some roght about and with a border of golde and lasede, and cortens and cossin cloths rought all over, whether these must passe by the name of hur linen, for she gives all her linen to to of hur grandchildren not namage hur householde linen, but in generly hur linen. let me intret this favour to your most affeeyonat frinde.' 'I must not goo into the hose [Latimer] for my brother in his pasyon swore i shoulde not com within the dores, but I woulde fane know what the lawere sath was my right in all thinges: i woulde not have them thinke me cuch a fole but that i woulde know my right in every thinge, though i take nothinge but what the will give me.' Later on she says her brother and she are now 'frindes in show.'

Nov. 28,
1642.

She and her old husband had hired Lord Bacon's house, Gorhambury, in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans, from Sir Thomas Meautis, the husband of Anne Bacon, daughter of the great chancellor's half-brother, Sir Nathaniel, who with her brother inherited Lord Bacon's estate.

Lady Sussex was often uneasy about her tenure of the house, the trouble of which fell as a matter of course upon Sir Ralph. Sir Thomas Meautis threatened to come and

live there, and she writes to Ralph that her landlord and his wife are come to stay with her. 'I belife they will stay July 1689 this fortnight. pore man he lokes miserably; he hath a belife that this are will recover him, so i could but in sifility desier ther stay as long as the plesedo.' Sir Thomas, however, died before the old Earl, and Lady Sussex continued to live there till her third marriage, to Lord Warwick. Lady Meautis afterwards married Sir Harbottle Grimston, one of the most prominent of the parliamentary leaders, yet Speaker of the first parliament of the Restoration, and they lived at Gorhambury, where Sir Ralph used to visit them in later years on almost as friendly terms as with its former inhabitants.

Lady Sussex entrusted Sir Ralph with all sorts of petty commissions: 'The felo was hear this day with a lode a coles,' she writes; 'i thinking your sarvant had agreed with Falcon sent thether for a chaldron and a halfe and he sent them, but my sarvant till nice the are very bad coles; i becech you let your sarvant pay him for them; i thought he was a knave and would not employ him any more. . . . it will be a month i fear, for this man can buy but a chaldron and a halfe at a time, so he can bringe but 4 chaldron and a halfe a wike. . . . i am glade your man hath agreed in another plas for twenty shillinges. . . . most of these feloes that carry coles lives nine or ten myles off at Bushey.' Sir Ralph has been 'inquiring out some damask': she replies: 'To peses i have sent for of the golde color, not that i have any present use of it, but truly it tis so very good and chepe i will by it for use hereafter.' . . . 'My thinkes to you for my sattine; it cam very will; some of it i employ for the backes of chers; the rest i entende for cortines; when the chinse stofes come in, if you see any prity ons remember me i pray you for to or three peses.' . . . 'I am very sory i dide not consider of the figerde sattine when i was at chelsey for truly though the prisce be unresonable i hade rather give it then by any of the figerde sattines that are to be hade hear; thorty shillinge the yarde the axe, and the color lokes lyke dort to that i have.' . . . 'The carpet truly is a good on. . . .

Nov. 12,
1689.

if i can have that and the other for forty ponde or a littell more i would by them; the woulde bee very fine for a bede, but onlie if one may have a very good peniworth; but in these times money is the best commodity.' . . . 'For the carpets if the gronde bee very doll and the flowers or workes in them not of very plesent colors i doubt the will bee to dole for to suet with my haninges and chers.' . . . Concerning the choice of a small carpet: 'If it will not sarve for a windo it will sarve for a fote carpet i want for that use.' . . . He sends her 'so many good pens and such good paper and so chepe,' she hopes to write 'a better hande'; but her scrawled letters do not show that she had any success. She would be glad to have some 'calico spottede with golde cuch as mrs barbordes bede is lynede with' . . . 'I must truble you to get me a hansom mofe bought . . . a fasyonable mofe for one as tale as your wife' [probably a present for Lady Verney]. For the trimming of a 'swite bage' she sends most minute directions: 'If you woulde ples to employe somebody to chuse me out a lase that hath but very littell silver in itt and not above a spangell or to in a peke i thinke would do will; i woulde not have it to hevy a lase; about the breth of a threpeny ribinge very littill broder will bee enofe; and desier Mrs. Varney i pray you to chuse me out some ribinge to make stringes; six yardes will be enofe; some shadoede sattine ribbinge will be the best of forpeny breth and i woulde fane have some very littill eginge lase as slite as may bee to ege the stringes and but littill silver in it; ten yardes will be enofe.' . . . 'Do me the favour to chuse me sixe wine glasses; I have cuch littill ons and none as my lorde uses to drinke in.' She also buys a dozen 'white plats,' and another commission is the mending of her sable gloves.

Aug. 23,
1639.

Nov. 12,
1639.

Sir Edmund asks Lady Sussex to sit to Vandyke for her portrait; the negotiations are long and difficult. She is loth to deny Sir Edmund, but thinks it 'truly money ill bestowde.' She frankly renounces any claim to beauty, but she has the bright complexion of a blonde, and takes some pains to preserve it. Myrrh water is 'good to make on lok younge longe;

i only wete a fine cloth and wipe my face over at night with it.'

She writes to Ralph: 'Put S^r Vandyke in remembrance Nov. 25,
to do my pictuer wel. I have sene sables with the clasp of 1639.
them set with dimons—if thos that i am pictuerde in wher
don so i think it would look very will in the pictuer. If S^r
Vandyke thinke it would do well i pray desier him to do all
the clawes so—i do not mene the ende of the tales but only
the end of the other peses they call them clase I thinke.' . . .
'I am glade you have made S^r Vandike minde my dres, when Dec. 10,
it is don I beceeh you pay him for it and get a hansom 1639
frame made to put it in and then present it to my lady and
your father from me, but the frame I wil pay for to.' . . .
'I am glade you have profalede with S^r Vandike to make my Jan. 18,
picture lener for truly it was to fat, if he made it farer, it 1640.
will bee for my credit—i see you will make him trimme it
for my advantige every way.' 'I am glade you have got
hom my pictuer, but i doubt he hath nether made it lener
nor farer, but to rich in ihuels [jewels] i am suer, but it tis
no great mater for another ago to thinke me richer then
i was. i see you have imployede on to coppe it, which if
you have, i must have that your father hade before, which
i wish coude be mendede in the fase, for it tis very ugly.
i beceeh you see whether that man that copes out Vandicks
coude not mende the fase of that—if he can any way do it,
I pray get him and i will pay him for it. it cannot bee worse
then it tis—and sende me worde what the man must have
for copinge the pictuer, if he do it will, you shall get him to
doo another for me. let me know I beceeh you how much
i am your debtor, and whether Vandicke was contente with
the fifty ponde.' The price of the copy was to be 'eyght
ponde.' Even if money was then at four and a half times
its present value, 50*l.* is little enough for 'a full length
picture, in a blew gowne with pearle buttons,' as the old
lists describe it. The Vandyke remained with Sir Edmund.
A copy seems to have gone to Lady Sussex at Gorhambury;
the difficulties of conveyance were extreme.

Ralph has bought her for 40*l.* a looking-glass 'from fines

Dec. 16,
1639.

[Venice],’ on which she had set her heart, and she writes : ‘I am very glade if a coppell of porters would undertake to bring it done carfully and for any resonable matter, suer that it is the saffest way. But if the will not I will sende a hors for it with paniers.’ There seem to have been further delays. ‘The cole wagen will be in London this weke but I doubt he cannot carry the pictuer with the glase. if he cannot, I think that may bee sent safe by the wagen of sentarbornes [St. Albans].’

June 22,
1640.

At last the picture is received at Gorhambury, and the original writes : ‘Swite Mr. Verney, the pictuer cam very will, many harty thinkes to you for it. the fram is a littell hurt, the gilt being robbede off. the pictuer is very ill favourede, makes me quite out of love with myselfe, the face is so bige and so fate that it pleses me not att all. It lokes lyke on of the windes poffinge—but truly I thinke it tis lyke the originale. If ever i com to London befor Sr Vandicke goo, i will get him to mende my pictuer, for thow I bee ill favourede i think that makes me wors than I am.’ There is here good proof that Vandyke did not flatter his sitters, as he has been often accused of doing: Lady Sussex was a woman of influence whom it might have been a temptation to propitiate at the cost of half an inch of cheek, if the higher interest of truth in art had not been uppermost in the mind of the painter. This portrait appears again in the correspondence in 1646. Lady Sussex, in announcing her approaching marriage to Lord Warwick, writes to Sir Ralph : ‘Sr i shoulde say something to you but you must not misintrept me for it; it is conserninge a pictuer; and i know you are so much my frinde that you woulde not willinly part with any of myne; but consideringe you can make no present use of them and i thinke you haveinge three, give me this confidence to saye this my desiers to you; which is my lorde much desieringe a good pictuer of mee att lenth and i haveinge non; and i confes not willinge to bringe any hether onles itt were a good noble pictuer which i cannot till how to compase without your favour and helpe; for i never hade any pictuer drane that was considerable but

that you have which Fandicke drue for mee; that if you woulde part with; i shoulde take itt for a great cortesy; and so much as itt coste you woulde bestowe uppon any thinge else that woulde keepe mee in your memory the copy of the pictuer you haveinge allredy; now i have sade all this i leve itt to your good plesuer if you can part with the pictuer; i will not saye from whence i hade it.' Sir Ralph diplomatically refuses: though 'reduced to many greate and sad extremities' . . . he had not so far forfeited himself 'as to be esteemed unworthy to bee the owner of that Jewell.' It seems hard that a picture so valued and cared for should have been lost, probably when Earl Verney's ruin dispersed many beautiful things.

As soon as the Short Parliament opened, Lady Sussex April 17,
1640. was anxious that Lord Warwick or Lord Northumberland should be proxy for her old husband, who was too infirm to attend the House of Lords; Ralph is to arrange this and many other things: 'you have now the serious afaires of parliment in considearasyon, won should not bee so unsivell to troble you with littell matters . . . but I will adveniter it. My desier to you is to by mee as much sattin of which of thes coulers you lyke best, as will make a cote for a child, about fore year olde, but do not send it down yet.' She thanks Mary for ordering 'ringes with posies' for her, on the death of the old Countess of Devonshire. The 'sattin' was for 'my prity godson,' Ralph's eldest boy, so the gift was delicately devised.

When the King was starting for Scotland, Sir Edmund, Aug 27,
1640. tormented by sciatica, 'took another turn at the Bathe.' Lady Sussex writes her inquiries to Ralph—'I longe much to hear what your good father is lyke to finde by the bath—for your selfe, i presume will, by getting an acquaintnce with many fare ladyes, and much jholity will be amonst you, but i pray be suer your father siffility do him no hort now, but doo you undertake all thinges of compiny, but have a care of your health to, for i have harde the bath is a very aguies ill are [air] therfor i pray bee not out of your loginge to late a nights. . . . the nues of the kainge gooinge to

yorke troubles me extremly. pray god his stay may be so littel that your father nede not folo.'

Mar. 10,
1640

Lady Sussex was very politically inclined, and followed every step of the great contest, as furnished by Sir Ralph, with deep interest. When he writes to her of the marriage contemplated between Princess Mary and the Prince of Orange, she says, 'i thinke you for your nues; i see the will adventur to mary, for all the fear of the times.'

July 1642.

Ralph is helping her to defend some fishery rights and delivers a petition for her signed by several peers. 'Suer this commande from the parlyment when it tis puplishede will friton the fishermen from comminge uppon our water.'

Sir Edmund pays her a farewell visit before joining the King's army; she is much concerned for him and enters into the anxiety felt by his family; she writes to Ralph: 'i am hartily sory to find you have so sade a hart; the wisest i know are most considerate; trubled thoughts cannot helpe anythinge . . . i becech you have a care of your selfe.'

In the unsettled state of the country after the war had begun her friends pressed her to move to a safer place than Gorhambury, but she would not desert her old husband, who could not well be moved: 'i hope in the lorde pese will com . . . ; if ther bee not i shall bee in a most misirable condisyon, for i will not stor from my good olde lorde what some ever bee coms of me.'

Sept. 10,
1642.

She desired to arm her servants, and wrote to Ralph: 'I must becech you to get some body to boy six caribens for me and some twenty ponde of poder i hope that will be enofe to defende us hear if it bee not poder enofe, as much as you thinke fitt, for i woulde fane have you and your lady as safe hear as at london, which truly i belive you will.' Ralph and his wife paid her a visit in August '42. Apparently he thought that Gorhambury was a safe place, for Lady Sussex writes to him in September: 'To lode of your stofe is com, which i have set up in the safest plas of my hose; i hope it will bee so and all myne hear'; though, as she says in another letter, 'wee bee throtonele because we

gave nothing to the parlyment.' Her house was never attacked, but there was much reason for alarm; she writes to Ralph: 'I thinke wee shall all bee ransakede therefor Sept. 1642
i beeech you get cuth paper for mee as you have for the safty of Cladon.' She was glad to secure through him a 'Protection' signed by Essex.

She was much affected by Sir Edmund's death at Edgehill, and wrote most sympathising letters to Ralph. Through all her own troubles she was often careful for his comfort, and sent special dainties; on one occasion 'pots Feb. 22,
of gely of pipens . . . it tis hollsom for you . . . and the 1643.
perly cakes is very good, nothings in them but oringe watter perle'; at another time 'podinges.' 'My fissicke made me so out of tune in my hede that truly i dorst not right.' 'i toke some fissicke hopinge it woulde have made my sperets somethinge cherfuller, but truly i finde myselfe still so doll and sade that I take littil ioy in any thinge in this worlde; i pray God give me a cherfuller hart.'

When soldiers were quartered at St. Albans, Lady April 1643.
Sussex fears they will come to Gorhambury to search for arms, and hears that it was said she was a 'casicolcke'; . . . 'but the gentillman the spoke it to assure them i was noe papes nor malignant . . . i am confident the parlyment will not give them any warents . . . but i will sende to sr tomis chike to speke to my lorde manchester, that in the hopper hose he will have a littill care of us; and in the lower hose i know you both will if you hear anythinge intendede that way.' Again: 'my protexsyon hath don me some good; . . . the take very many horses up hear; . . . one of the men goinge to chesome the lade hold uppon his horse so i had fane to sende the protexsyon and when the saw that the let my man have my hors agane.' Ralph's 'stofe' is now sent back to him in London, and Lady Sussex sends also to his care 'twenty dises, a foyder and to dosen of plats.' The dishes she bids him 'put of [sell]: i hope you may get fore and a leven penes hapeny an once for them.' . . . 'I am most glade your stofe cam all safe to you; it plesede mee when i hade somethinge of yours under my

care ; it gave no truble ill assure you ; nor never can any-thinge bee so to me . . . but a plesuer when i may have pouer to sarve you in anythinge, for as you are you must ever be the frind i shall most valy.'

She was evidently a very determined woman, and though she desired to deal fairly with every one, she was not at all inclined to be weakly indulgent. In '43 she writes, in view of still worse times coming: 'i have a very good mynde to pay my debts whilst i have where withall to pay itt for it would bee a very great affliction to mee to have any cuffer [suffer] lose by mee'; and in another letter concerning an abatement to her tenants: 'I shoulde bee very willinge to yelde to anythinge that is resonable; but if the make use of my fortune for ther one paments, and let mee bee without my rent, then i must loke to myselfe.' The estate of her grandchild is so lessened in value that they beg she will abate her jointure according to her proportion and be at half the loss that may happen to the tenants by pillaging. She writes to Ralph: 'Now I must till you that which may bee you will harly believe, that I hartily cuffer for my good olde lorde how truly grows so very weke that i fear he will not holde out very longe.' One arm and leg are paralysed, though they feel warm; 'he eats his meat as well as he used to do and slipes well'; a few days later, 'he is grown so infinit weke, not able to put on anythinge but lapede in a shete and a blanket and so lade uppon his palet . . . he hath exprest so much love and respecte to me all the time i have hade him, that truly I cannot but bee very hartily sensible of his lose: i woulde not neglect anythinge for his beriall that may expres my love and valy of him; it will cost me a great dell of mony, but i must not be failinge in my last sarvis to him.' The funeral cost her little less than 400*l*. He is buried at 'borom,' parish church to 'nue hale,' where a chapel, adjoining the chancel, was built by his ancestors for their tombs. Ralph lends her his black bed. 'Blakes' must be provided for the relations, and a 'fale' for herself. She begs for a pass for all her 'compiny'—two coaches with six horses and six that

July 1643.

drew the hearse, and eight and twenty men on horseback besides footmen. She is resolved not to spend all that the herald suggested, but would be content to have 'a greate flage, and a crone, helme and sorde and spors.' . . . 'Good man i am confident he is happy, and i am glade he is lade amonst his one blode.' She was hoping for a visit from Ralph and his wife, 'which will bee very cordiall to mee; truly i am so sade i know not what to do with myselfe; and the dispersinge of my family [household] will truble me much; but ther is no remedy i cannot holde on in the way i am in; . . . this wike i will prepare to receve on Sunday, that will make me the better fittide to order all my affars i hope.'

Lady Sussex laments the state of the country and her own misfortunes: 'i live the suddist uncomfortable life that ever Nov. 1643, any dide; for you know how littill i have to ples mee from any of my one blode, but I mene to trye whether i can get a rome or to att my lady gorges that I may goo some times thether; though I belive i shall finde but littill to ples me ther, yet some littill change will be bettir then all to gather in this doll plas.'

In the year '45 matters have not improved for Lady Sussex, although she is on the parliament side which is now in the ascendant: 'I confes i have not a frinde left mee May 8, 1645. hear whom i can anyway relye uppon . . . i pray god give me comfort in the best thinge, for in this world I can expect none; . . . may be you harde i was towards matrymony, but i may till you truly ther is no such mattir, for i thinke i shall never finde a man to my hart. . . . My sone's wife last mared the lorde [Rochester] may bee a warning to me, she haveing but nuely got hur lande of the sequestrasyon but above to thosonge ponde debts was lade uppon hur estate . . . the times here are such that i dare not stor nor remove anythinge.' . . . 'It tis not to be tolde you the fessasyons i have hade in my [fishery] suts; picering [Pickering] hath plade the part of a most arant knave with me agane.' Ralph applies to her for a loan of money, being pressed by one of his sisters to make up her dowry; he sends her a

Sept. 29,
1645.

present at the same time : 'I beseech you bee pleased to receive halfe a dozen combs and a little combe box I bought at Paris, w^{ch} is soe very a trifle that I durst not send it had I not remembered twould sute well with your glasse trimed with silver. Maddame, though this is but a toye, yet being in fashion here, I hope you will accept it.' Lady Sussex, in reply, cannot promise much help, but suggests his selling some of his things, notably the silver porringer she had given to her godson. 'Your word was security enofe to mee to performe what you desier ; but to my grife I may truly assure you that my estate is falen so low, and the unsartinty of itt and my life eueh haveinge nether lese nor inheritance that any security from mee cannot anyway bee considarable ; . . . my plat beinge all gone but a very littill left ; and some of my gemes gon to ; for this last year and halfe i dishorst much more then my cominges in ; my fiftes and twentyes part i pade and ten ponde a wike for an extrordanry busyness I know not how longe, besides contribusyons on both sides & many constant payments belive me uppon my worde and truth i have tolde you nothings but the very truth of my fortune as now itt tis : . . . the hole kaindome beinge as itt tis, wee cannot till how longe wee may enjoy anythings : . . . and for my littill rents that are due now i owe more then the com to ; it troubles me hartily that i cannot assist you so fure as i woulde do. . . . mony is so hard a commodity to come by now that many cuffers much . . . ; and my pore sister martens children is in eueh want and right to mee daly and i can do nothing for them, and some others as near to me to ; and my brother Edword so unworthy and naght, hath not nor will not part with a peny to any since my mother debth ; now let me till you i thinke you hade best let me put of the bason and euer and candillstikes and if god sende the times mende and that i have life i hope i may make itt up agane . . . and i will do my best to put of your blake things . . . the plate and blakes will feeh near threecore i hope if i can get in my rents i may make it up a hondreth. . . . i am resolved to sell all i have before i will adfentir to boro agane.'

Ralph in reply writes that his sister is in such want of

her dowry, he must raise money however he can: 'rather than one soe neare me should want her portion and lose her perferment I must needes part with that you gave my Boy, which I have ever kept as an eminent testimony of your love and bounty, to myselfe and family. But now it must goe for I know not any other way.'

In spite of her poverty Lady Sussex cannot help writing to Lady Verney: 'Swite madam if you make any stay in paris and see any prity thinges that is not to chargable fitt for my waringe beinge a wido send me worde'; and she seems also to have consoled herself with entertaining her friends, as she mentions having 'a great dell of compyny to dyne.' This was followed up the next year, 1646, by the report of her marriage with Lord Warwick (Admiral of the Fleet under the Parliament), which reached Ralph from various quarters. Sir Roger Burgoyne writes to him: 'Certainly the match will go forward and I question not but that it is made known to you before this from herself.'

At the same time Anne Lee writes to Lady Verney: 'my lady I presume you heer is to mary my Lord Worick . . . shee expectes to be very hapy. I wish it may prove so in conclusion, strange shanges in this world. my brother [i.e. Ralph] might do well to give good counsell but now it is to late. They are to mary within this fortnight. Pore Gorumbery will be left wich troble me much, but if you wold com over agane I shold coumfor up myself.'

Ralph writes his congratulations to Lady Sussex: 'I canot prevaile with myselfe to bee any longer silent, espetially since divers of my freinds, and acquaintance (that well know how much duty and servise I owe your ladishipp) have been pleas'd to informe mee of your intended marriage. They say it is already concluded, and I know full well, that you doe nothing rashly (espetially in a matter of soe high concernement) which makes mee very confident the event will proove answerable to your expectation and my desire: the times I confesse at present are very sadd and miserable but I trust as you surpassse all others in goodnesse soe you may as far exceed them in happiness.'

A few months later Lady Warwick explains the reasons for the step she has taken : ‘ My continuall troubles, wantinge a discret and helpful frinde as your noble father and selfe was ever to mee made mee thinke of marrige beinge unable to undorgoo what i fonde continually uppon mee ; i presume you have harde to whom i am wede . . . my lorde is extreme kainde and i hope will continue so ; you as a frinde i have and must ever hily valy . . . parpetuall compiny i have had since my change in my condisyon truly i have not hade time for any thinge but now I am com into the contrey my first lynes i derset to you . . . i shall ever have the same harte to you and your i have hade : and if ever i bee able make good my promeses in all thinges, etc.’ In spite of these protestations, however, it would seem that her friendship somewhat cooled after her marriage ; perhaps the Verneys expected too much from her prosperity in their own adversity ; and there are but rare letters from her to Ralph after this date. As the wife of one of the few Parliamentarian Peers and the Admiral of the Fleet, Lady Warwick now played an important part in London Society, after her days of obscurity at Gorhambury. Lord Warwick died in 1658, and she then married a fourth husband, Edward Montague, second Earl of Manchester, General to the Parliament ; so that Lady Sussex may be said to have fairly earned her familiar nickname of ‘ Old Men’s Wife.’

CHAPTER XII.

THE RICH 'WIDO.'

1637-1647.

THE youngest sister of Margaret, Lady Verney, another Margaret, had been left a widow at five-and-twenty, with a large fortune from her husband, John Pulteney, of Misterton in Leicestershire. She lived at Langley Marsh and was a near neighbour of 'ould Lady Verney.' Her property was to go to her husband's sisters and an infant nephew, but although this child had not the smallest right to anything during Mrs. Pulteney's life, the Court of Wards put in a claim of the Crown to a fourth of her jointure. Her petition against this great abuse was written for her by Ralph, but all that was asked of Lord Cottington, the Master, was that she be allowed to take a lease of the lands thus burdened.

The child, however, died soon after, Mrs. Pulteney's large jointure became free from any interference, and the young widow was immediately beset by a crowd of suitors. She seems to have been a clever managing woman of the world, yet with something of the religious feeling which distinguished both Dentons and Verneys. Her influence over Mr. Pulteney had been very good, leading him away from various dissipations in which he had indulged. 'She deserved his estate for she saved his soul,' says one letter. Although she consulted Sir Edmund from time to time, Ralph, a year younger than herself, was her mainstay. She sends him the various love letters she receives, and appeals to him against the reproaches of her mother when she refuses an

May 5,
1638.

eligible offer. The pecuniary claims of each possible husband are discussed one after the other with curious directness and minuteness. Sir John Paulet (afterwards Lord Paulet) 'hath £2500 in demcanes, & £800 per annum was parsonage land, & hold of the Church, subject only to £300 of old rent, & his mothers jointure of £100 p annum.' Old Lady Denton objects to him because he does not live in Bucks, but her daughter observes rather tartly 'it was knowne before ever he came to the howes where his estate laye.' 'Good cusin,' she writes to Ralph, 'I give you maney thankses for your care in my bisnis, & for what peopel think, I care not . . . I have writen to your father about Sir J. P.; pray axe my browther first of the pasiges that have bin—for the man, my mother sayes she canot as far as she sees Dislike him, & for my owne part I pray god send me a good hus :, & I care not wher his land lies. My lady Dencort' (a sister of Lord Falkland) 'writ to me very ernistly about her sun, that the mach might goe forward, but i am soe much against it that I will for no conditiones in the world here of it. My Mother is for it, for shee heeres he hath a greater estate than this, which is I beleve her reson ; but for my part I thinke all the riches in the world without content is nothing—for this liberty I will take to myself, that is, to make choice of one as I afecte, as for him I find I canot.' 'Suer I am not so fond as to be in love with aney at tow days sight,' says the poor woman. 'I hope god will give me power of myselfe yet. I shall not setill my affections on aney till I see sum goodness in a man to induce me to it.'

May 28,
1638.

June 9,
1638.

There is a very fiery letter from the gentleman himself, Francis Leeke, Lord Deincourt, showing the style of wooing then affected by lovers to their ladies: 'Most honoured & virtuous Mistrisse, since y^e happy houre when first I see you my heart hath still been contemplating upon yo^r bewties, & ye only joy of my life consisteth in y^e remembrance of you & yo^r rare vertues. pardon therefore my boldness in presenting you wi^t these lines w^h love commands me to send, & to lett you know both how much I honour you, & y^t y^e

May 24,
1638.

torments wh^h I now suffer for your bewtie are insupportable, if not revealed to you, in whose power aloane it is to make me y^e happiest or y^e most unfortunatest man upon Earth, for I vow to y^e Sacred Heavens there is nothing in this world y^t I desier mor than to be soe happy as to be your servant, & I have A greate ambition y^t you would please to honour me so farre as to lett me receive some gracious lines from your faire hands, or otherwise to admitt me to waite upon you, I should be confident you would grant me these favours if my lines might but be as pleasing unto you as I am perfectly y^o most loyall Servant.'

This 'mach' was also set aside by the fair widow. In the following year Lord Deincourt's courtship was succeeded by that of Lord Howard of Eserick, a widower with five children. Very full particulars of his manors and lands within the counties of York and Essex are forwarded for inspection: 'the manor of Eserick containing by suretay four thousand acres—rich grownes now out of lease & ready to be lett at 10^s the acre which amounte to £2000 per annum.' To her friends' remonstrances Mrs. Pulteney replies: 'I am June 3, 1638.
very willing to take your counsil in having richis enoufe, all ouer natewers is to apte to set ouer hartes on that which is worst for us, but I hope I shall never put my trust in uncertain richis. Some men will live beter with 500^{lb} per anam than sum will with fifteen if thay be roving feloes.'

'Good Ralph,' writes old Lady Denton, 'For my lord Mar. 16, 1638.
Howard i knowe of my one knoledge he is honorably desendede, and upon report is onest and worthye, but Ralphe you shall find by your fathar's lettar howe i ame In gagede for a nothar. . . . Soc i beleve i ame bound in onystye to forbare writinge to hur In any waye to prosed with my Lord Ho & Ralphe i wil speake it to you I should nevar ventar upon so many children as 5, althoughe the ware wel provided for, for you know I know it is a grate family. . . . I will nether write anythinge against this match nor withe it . . . Noe man livinge coulede wright mor of any mane In the behalfe of my Lord Ho then my Ladye Hubbard did to me, but with all shee concluded his children was such an

obstacle'—and so on. A certain Lord Charles (no surname being mentioned) and Lord Howard are both recommended by Lord Pembroke, the Lord Chamberlain, whose opinion stood high with Sir Edmund and his son. Lady Denton wishes Lord Howard's suit 'were at a nend, it is but a pore business.' Sir Martin Lister,¹ whose brother Sir Matthew is managing the estates of Mary (Sidney) Countess of Pembroke, also sends good advice. 'I pray God direct hur,' says her bewildered mother.

Mrs. Pulteney had given some promise to the two suitors not to decide for any one during a given time, perhaps to prevent their quarrelling or in order to get rid of importunities, and this brought her into great straits both with them and the Lord Chamberlain, as each side considered that she was more or less pledged, or at least that she would encourage no other suitor. Suddenly the wilful widow took matters into her own hands, and in spite of all the persuasions and dissuasions, the condemnations and recommendations of her friends, she privately married Colonel the Honourable William Eure, son of Lord Eure, a Roman Catholic, who immediately after the wedding went off to join the King's army in the North.

Ralph was thunderstruck, and moreover alarmed at the way in which the Lord Chamberlain, very powerful in the days of Council-table Government, would take this neglect of his advice and his wishes. But what was much more serious to him and his father was the fact that the selected spouse was a Roman Catholic. Among the religious party to which the Verneys belonged, this was looked upon as a kind of infidelity, and with a feeling of horror as of apostasy to the great cause of religion. Converts had been made in great numbers among the gay Court ladies or 'fantastic speculators, like Sir Kenelm Digby'; Henrietta Maria's power over her husband was sufficient to nullify the effect of any proclamations or acts which Charles might consent to

¹ His son, another Sir Martin, married Mary, daughter of Richard Lord Wenman, and died 1670.

issue against them, while Catholics and converts filled the Court and were placed in great positions.

Here is Ralph's letter to his father, then on the Scotch expedition with the King, announcing the dreadful fact:—
 'Oh Sr shee is married, shee is married! and therefore now April 1,
 tis past recall. this unlucky deed was donn before I mis- 1639.
 trusted ever twas. Her only aime now is to continue in
 your and her mother's good oppinion, for I find her hart
 hardened against any things the world or her other friends
 can say. And since 'tis thus, let us endeavour (as much as
 in us lieth) to preserve her (wilfully lost) reputation. I have
 advised her to goe downe and conceall this, at least untell
 his returne from the North, and then let him renew his sute
 and prevaile as uppon a second pretention. This I conceive
 will bee the best course to blind the world and protect her
 credit from perpetuall shame.' He goes on to say how 'It April 5,
 afflicts me to see on I loved soe well utterly ruined, but since 1639.
 there is noe helpe . . . I would gladly doe the best I could
 concerninge the carrage of the businesse . . . that our
 friends in the country may not have reason to lay the fault
 on us . . . Had this unfortunate businesse not been quite
 finished before my cominge upp, I am confident I should
 either have brake or at least protracted it, but twas too late
 then (what hazard soever a man would undergoe) to doe it;
 those whome god hath joyned together tis not in our power
 to put asunder. . . . I know you will beare to greate a share
 of the affliction with him that will alwaies pray for the
 preservation of her honour and your happy and speedy
 returne. . . . I am so full with this businesse that I cannot
 say how infinitely I am troubled for the king's affaires.'

Sir Edmund fully shares Ralph's distress: 'I protest
 to God, when I redd your lotter, a palsye tooke my hands,
 soe that in five hours I could hold noething steddly.' In
 another letter: 'My soule is greoved for her misfortune. Easter
 . . . I praye deale cleerely with her, and lett her preserve as Day, 1639.
 much of her discretion and reputation as shee can; for,
 beleeeve mee, shee has made a large forfeit of them boath . . .
 This woman laye soe neare my heart that I shall fiend her

folly ther whilst I have an hower to live.' A few weeks later he writes from Newcastle that Col. Eure has not come on with the army, 'but I heare he has sould all his land, and means to settle about lundon, wher hee is suer to have a ritche widdow. I heare hee is a vast spender, and has a father and a Brother to relieve that has not bredd to eate; hee sould his land for six thousand pownds. all this layd togeather, God help someboddy.' Mrs. Eure is in good heart, and talks of putting off her other gentlemen 'between jest & good earnest, soe as they know not how to take me; so I am resolved to dowe till it be reveled.' 'The town makes havock of my good nam . . . I defie them all . . . I am not in any ons tewishion.'

May 21,
1639.

Lady Denton was furiously angry not only at the match, but at its having been carried forward without her 'privy or permission,' and addresses Ralph in the fiercest terms, as if he were chiefly to blame. 'Your mother writes me word about a samite gowne, i remenibar i did here tofore thincke of sush a thinge, but now i pray tel hur if she would provide me sack cloth and Linc y^t with asshis, then i mought morne for the folye of my wise disobedint children. i hear he is with out exception, only his religione—but that is such a cut to me that y^t hath a most killed me. yf he had had never a peny y^t should not a trobled me at all. i heare he hath a 1000*l*. a yeare, and soe discret that he wil live betar of that, than sum will doe of to thousant. Your house is ye common scare of toune and cuntry, howe he and shee hath foled you all, but I knowe some of you knue of this, when ther was helpe of yt. You say what God will must be. God is not the othar of any yll. the meanes was nevar yoused, becase she was kept from me. I have not youth and time to reveng, so I will betacke me to my beades and desier I may lyve to forgive and forget injuries done me.'

June 18,
1639.

Ralph writes again to his father: 'Now Sr I must tell you the unhappy woeman was married by a Popish Priest; it seemes you writ to her to know, and shee (beinge, as I suppose, ashamed of soe foule an act) desired mee to informe

you of it. poore woeman, she dares not make any of her friendes acquainted with it, therefore you need not take notice of it. This unluckie businesse hath made my grandmother infinitely offended with my mother, my Wife and myselve and indeed the whole house, except yourselve, for she often saith you have dealt wisely and honestly and lovingly in this businesse, but all the rest of her children are fooles, and the night before I came from Hillesdon she told me that (except you) wee had all dealt unfaithfully with her. Whilst she charged us with folly, I was not much troubled at it (for I know myselve much guilty of that), but when she charged us all in generall and mee in p'ticular with unfaithfulnesse, I could not but make some reply'; how she 'might doe well never to imploy those that had dealt treachoursly with her, and that in castinge such false asperitions on her owne children she did but defile her owne nest.' He was troubled that the censure should come from her 'that had ever pretended soe much love to mee. All this was done in my aunt Isham's presence, and I am glad it was soe, for many old people are apt to forget there owne words and mistake others,' etc. etc.

'Cosan Verney,' writes Aunt Isham herself to Ralph. June 22,
1639.
'Most of hur discose was off hur slfe, being ould and in troubles. You should not a rested hur wordes so sounne out of hur mouth, and intarpating them to your owne sence, but a givn hur leve to explane her owne mencing, for she thinkes you, for all this, to be very true to youre frindes, and soe I end this discose to lett you knoe how well bisnes goe nowc my Brother Eure is come to his Wife: the party is beter contented a great dell, and shoues him more respecke then I thought she would a done . . . thus I rest youre loving Ante.' Then, comforting herself by inquiries as to the fashions worn in London, Mrs. Isham adds: 'I pray send me word if wee bottone petticoates and wascotes wheare they must be Botend [buttoned].'

Mr. Eure had come from the King's camp at Berwick, and met his wife near London, where their marriage was declared.

May 11,
1639.

There is a letter from the delinquent herself: 'My mo' is in beter temper than shee was and is wiling as we should live here [Hillesden] . . . but I must confes to you I like it not by ancy meanes, naythier do I thinke as he will . . . As I have run all the hazard in my maching to him, so I desier to youse all the meanes I can to convert him, for if I live neere London I can have the best devines to my own house, and besides I intend to keepe on myselfe' [poor Mr. Eure!]. 'You know Mr. Ockly is but A crabid man and he may dow him more hurt then good, and besids he is not youst to disputations, for Mr. Sute told me of on, I thinke he lives at Lambboth, he sayth he is y^e best in ingland and hath bin youst to it. Pray if you here of are [e'er] A pritey hous as is fit for us, send me word. he is wiling to live in London the next winter but y^t I am uterly against, for he would be so continewaly amongst his own religion as I dow not like that. He did much desier to come for A wicke or ten days and so to A gon againe, but I intreated him to the contrary, so I hope he will not, for my mo: knows not that I am: and if he should com before he comes home all togethur it must needs be discovred. My intentions are to com to London as soon as he returnes and thar to lye in the sitey privatly till I can have A place to goe to and to discover y^t I am maryed at the time of his coming home . . . If I could meet with A pretey hous I would willingly have on in the privatest place I can, but neere A church.'

Her sister, Mrs. Isham, writes for her, a few days before: 'she is veri sicke of a nagye and she cannot rite hur slfe. She wold have youre wife send downe hur Red Damaxe Peticote and Wascote'; and then come many injunctions concerning the fashions: 'she wold have youre Wife by hur a blake taffity peticote and wascote, with a hansom lase and make yt oup with haninge sleeves, and rowne skrites and if they be worne. The resone as she maketh this hast is becase Sr Thomas Wanman hath spoke to hur to chrissen his Boye, and she wold wilingly be out of moring then; and if shee should Die before she

doth warit, yet would sarve to make a short moring Cloke for the Man you wot of,' meaning her husband, a somewhat grim jest for a newly-married wife.

She had in her widowed days given 900*l.* to her god-daughter Margaret Verney. Ralph writes to her about the money 'which you were pleased to bestow upon my sister.' . . . 'you now allow her 20*l.* per yeare beside her diet which comes to 26*l.* a yeare more, which would be about the interest of the 900*l.*' Colonel Eure, though poor himself, seemed to have behaved very well, and not objected to his wife's large gift to her godchild, made in very different circumstances. 'Sweet cusen,' writes Mrs. Eure to Ralph, 'I June 29,
1639. hope for all the badde reports of sum, as my hus will proove himselfe an honest man, but if he hath not y^t estate which he hath reported it to be, he hath not deceived me, for I never inquired after it, but I believe as it is full as good as he told you and rather beter, but tis not y^t I stand upon, for his religion is now the thing I looke after, which I hope in time may be altered. I find no aversues in him to heare eyther me or aney as I shall bring, which I am very joiful at, and his religion excepted I know few like him. Since his coming up he spake to me concerning Pegge. he told me as he thought as it was my intention to dow sumthing for her, and desired me to bestow that of her which I ever intend, and desired me to dow it presently, y^t it might be my one [own] acte,' which sounds kind and wise on his part. The god-daughter so generously treated, now aged sixteen, had a temper of her own, as appeared in after life, and seems to have behaved with little loyalty to her aunt. She was probably vexed and mortified at the change in her position, and in the following year it appears that she had spread evil reports concerning her new uncle, till it required all Ralph's good management to set matters right with Mrs. Eure; he was greatly displeased with Margaret's ingratitude and indiscretion.

When Sir John Lenthall is arranging some matters April 1640. between Mr. Eure and his wife's brother, Sir Alexander Denton, he appoints the Inner Temple Church as the place

of meeting, 'about 2 of ye clocke,' in which to do their business.

Mrs. Eure lived much in Yorkshire, at the old Lord Eure's, with her husband and her two little girls Margaret and Mary, although she spent part of the year at her own home, Misterton. Instead, however, of carrying out her admirable plans of conversion, Margaret Eure, who loved her husband, was not unnaturally brought over to his faith, as was probably his intention and that of the priest, who seemed to leave the rein on her neck and later on drew it in much more tightly, for poor Ralph, when in exile at Blois, complained that 'Misterton by the instigation of her priest, has urged me harshlie, otherwise than I expected.' Mrs. Eure's account of the utter disorganisation of country life during the civil wars is as vivid for the districts in the neighbourhood of York and Hull as are those of Lady Sussex for St. Albans and Hertfordshire. Rents were not paid, produce was not sold, tenants were not to be had at any price; the writers are persons of large fortune, and the smaller landowners and those whom they employed must have suffered still more.

In the spring of 1643 Mrs. Eure applies for a pass from the Parliament to go from Yorkshire to London 'that I may have liberty to wander up and downe.' She has many delays and disappointments, but 'longe loocket for comes at last.' She is in London in 1644 and finds her own people in dreadful trouble: her brother, Sir Alexander Denton, and his family, and Mrs. Isham and her husband are in the Tower, the men as close prisoners, the women sometimes in confinement, at other times voluntarily sharing in the troubles of husbands and brothers. Mrs. Eure writes from Tower Hill in April: 'I think Turkes could not be used worse—but all as they can doe to us, is but to make us suffer in this warlde—was left all as poore as Jobe, but with I hope the faith of Jobe, because ye Lorde gave us pashance to under goe that as we did suffer. Now I am come to towne to put ourselves into clothes.'

In the autumn of 1644, Colonel Eure was killed. Doll

Leeke refers to him as truly 'a gallant man, the whole nation has a lose in him; he had but one fault,' that of his religion, which his wife's family could never forgive, though they had learnt to respect and love him. Lady Sussex writes to Sir Ralph in September: 'Your ante is i believe a very sad woman for the lose of her fine husbände—i belive he hath not left her so good a wido as he founde her. She will have an infinite want of you now, as i am suer i have, if she be not changed in her religion she is happy.'

Mrs. Eure herself writes in November: 'Sweet Nephew . . . I am now over run with miserys and troubls, but the greatest misfortown that could suer hapen to me in this world was the Death of the galentest man that ever I knew in my Life, but my comfort is that he had time to prepare him selfe for a beter world, which I am confident he will injoye, it was my misfortewen to be from him at his death, and as the currant of the times run it is a question whether I shall see aucy frend I have againe, for I am now at Misterton and am ther like to conteneue for I have not wherewithall to visit a frend, but I have one comfort left me yet which is tho I have not a fortewne to my mind, yet I have brought my mind to my sortowne, which is the greatest happiness I can saye I do injoye.'

Sir Ralph is full of sympathy, and offers her the loan of the great black bed and hangings from Claydon as the only consolation within his means. This great black bed, with its impressive amplitude of gloom, travels about the family whenever a death occurs, till the very mention of it gives one a feeling of suffocation!

Mrs. Eure had a good deal of property on her hands, and required a man to manage her business; her nephew, Henry Verney, much her own age, spent the next year with her, and talked in grand style about her affairs. 'We have just sold some land,' he writes, 'to him as will in herit her jointure after her death for two years purchase,' so depressed was the land market at that moment.

Consolation, however, was at hand. Her brother, the Doctor, writes from Misterton, where he went to attend her

Sept. 1645. in a serious illness: 'My sister has relapsed into a bad jaundice. She remembers her service to you both. She is as ill in mind as in body, continues obstinate, but I hope the best, for I have great reason to believe she will quickly marry & (wth is my comfort) to a P-tesant this time. Take no notice of it, no not to Harry, to whom I daresay nothing is imparted for I had it sub sigillo. I would have sent you his name if I durst. Y^t marriage is intended is clear to Harry & to others, but to whom I p-sume is knowne only to me & one more of her friends. it is not so sure as I hope it will be shortly.' The intended was the Honourable Philip Sherard, second son of Lord Sherard, and a Captain in the army of the Dutch States; and Ralph, in spite of his own poverty, inquires for how much he could buy the commission for his brother Edmund.

1647. Two years after, Lady Verney writes that Mrs. Sherard 'is of our opinion now.' She is not in London, because Captain Sherard is so fond of field sports that he keeps her in Leicestershire. They had two boys, and a century later Mrs. Sherard's great-grandson married Sir Ralph's great-granddaughter.¹ Her two little Eure girls were afterwards coheiresses of their grandfather, Lord Eure, whose sons had all died. His estates, in Yorkshire and elsewhere, had been frittered away at different times, although eventually Margaret and Mary inherited 1,514*l.* a year each, 500*l.* of which, per annum, was to be paid to their mother.

Mrs. Sherard lived on most friendly terms with her four Verney nephews, more like brothers than her own, who, as often happens, seemed to belong to an older generation. Mun comes and stays with her for weeks at a time when the King's army had ceased to exist, and London was too hot to hold such a strong Royalist. Henry, as we have seen, was at one time her right hand, and he was constantly backwards and forwards whenever he had no better place to go to. Even the scapegrace Tom was not quite out of the sunshine of her aunt-like regard, while she never ceased

¹ Bennet Sherard, third Earl of Harborough, and Elizabeth, daughter of the first Earl Verney.

to consider Ralph and his wife her dearest friends, and she was almost as troublesome to him with commissions as Lady Sussex herself: 'for my dimone ringe, ther is seven ponde stons cut in the shape of yours & to littell ones, in the pendants are littall hanging stons without foyles,' which he was to have re-set for her—'Thirteen yardes of paudesoye, satteen, max mohayre, flowered sacsinet, striped goud stuffe for a gonne, scarlet taffety, & French Taby,' in one bill would make up a considerable number of fine gowns; the cost of this particular envoy was 18*l.* 18*s.* 0*d.*

All the widows marry again, even when they have been much attached to their husbands, sometimes three and even four times, at the earliest 'convenient' moment. Perhaps, in the troublous period of the Civil Wars, the protection of a man was very important, and they may have felt, though for different reasons, like a half-French lady friend of ours, who, when expostulated with for marrying after she was between fifty and sixty, replied, '*Dans ces temps de chemins de fer il faut absolument un mari.*' Mrs. Eure's marriages at all events were very unworldly, and not like those of Lady Sussex with her three Earls.

CHAPTER XIII.

SIR EDMUND WITH THE KING IN THE SCOTCH WAR.

1639.

LORD PEMBROKE's summons 'to my very loveinge freind Sir Edmund Verney, Knight, one of the gentlemen of His Majesty's most honorable privy chamber,' arrived on February 7, 1639. It announced that the King having resolved 'upon a royal journey to York. . . . His Majesty's royal pleasure is that all occasions sett apart you be in readines in your owne person by the 1st of April next at the city of Yorke, as a curassier in russett armes, with gilded studds or nayles and befittingly horsed, and your servants which shall wayt upon you horst in white armes, after the manner of a hargobusier, in good equipage.' If his necessary occasions in his Majesty's service will not permit, some gentleman of quality is to be sent in his stead. The summons found Sir Edmund troubled in mind and infirm in body. He had been consulting a quack; Sir John Leeke hopes that 'the Cobler may cure y^r sciatica which Mustris wroght me worde is your new name for an owld ach.' Lady Sussex had thought him 'very sade this crismas' at Gorhambury: 'i fearede he hade been discontentede some way, but he tolde me it was not so, but that he was oftime in a grete dele of pane. i pray God he may get helpe or else it will shorten his time i doubt. . . '

Jan. 9,
1639.

Little as he sympathised with the objects of the expedition, Sir Edmund made his will and prepared to follow his master. The will, dated the 20th of March, 1639, is witnessed by Tho. Isham; Fran. Drake; Geor. Elyott; Robert Busby;

John Humfrir and Will. Roades. It is a touching document, showing both his earnest religious feeling and strong family affection :

‘I, Sir Edmund Verney, . . . considering the frailty of mankind, ye certainty of death, and the uncertainty of ye time of death . . . bequeath my soul unto Almighty God my creator, and to his beloved son Jesus Christ, my only Lord, Savior and Redeemer, by and through whose only death merits and passion I do assuredly trust to have salvation and forgiveness of all my sins, and in due time to be made an inheritor amongst the elect of his heavenly kingdom. . . . My body I will shall be interred in ye chancel of the Parish church of Middle Claydon, with as little pomp and charges as my executor conveniently may. . . .’ He goes on to give directions concerning ‘such estate of goods and chattels as it has pleased the Almighty to bless me with in this transitory life. . . .’

His trust in Ralph is entire : ‘I constitute my son Ralph my sole executor, having had experience of his fidelitie unto me and of his love for his brothers and sisters.’ 20*l.* he leaves as a stock for the poor people of the parish. Annuities of 40*l.* a year to his sons Thomas and Henry ; to Edmund and each of his daughters he leaves 5*l.*, they being provided for by the profits of the Aulnage. ‘To Doll Leake, my niece, 20*l.* To John Rhodes my faithful servant and bailiff at Claydon [whose descendants still live there] an annuity of 5*l.* . . .’ To his daughter-in-law Mary, for whom his love was great, 40*l.* for a ring, ‘which I desire her to wear for my sake.’ To his mother 20*l.* ‘To my dear and beloved wife all such moneys as are in her custody at the date of this my will’ ; half his linen, with the use of half his plate and household stuff, which was to be shared with Ralph, all his ‘fuell of wood, furze and cole at Claydon, the coach and four of the coach horses with their harness and furniture’ ; ‘stuff for a mourning gown to the women & cloth for a mourning sute & cloak for the men legatees,’ etc. etc.

He left London with the King about the 21st of March. The expedition was more like a progress than the opening

of a campaign. The 'gay cavalcade' that accompanied them was not likely to overawe men who had taken up arms for a great cause, whatever Charles' councillors may have led him to expect.

April 1,
1649.

Sir Edmund, writing to his son in the tenderest terms on his arrival at York, says: 'Good Raphe since Prince Henry's death I never knew soe much grieffe as to part from you, and trewly because I saw you equally afflicted with it my sorrow was greater; but Raph wee cannott live always togeather. It cannott bee longe ere by cource of nature we must be severd; and if that time be prevented by accident yett wee must resolve to beare it with that patience and courage as becomes men and cristians; and soe the great god of Heaven send us well to meete againe eyther in this woarld or in the next. The King has beene basly betrayd; all the party that hee hoped uppon all this while has basly left him; as we are this day informed: the two cassels of Edenbrough and Dunbarton are yeilded upp without one blowe; and yett they were boath provided soe well as they were impregnable soe long as they had rittle, which they wanted not. Dekeeth, a place of greate strength, wher the Crowne and Septer laye is yeilded to; and the Covenanters has taken them awaye and a greate deale of Armes and munition to; yett my lor Treasurer of Scottland undertooke to the King to keepe all that safe; and all these are given upp without one blowe. Aberdine wee heare is yeilded upp to and noe blowe given; and the King sent 4,000 of the choysest Armes hee had theather; soe that now I am confident the show of making a party ther for the Kinge has beene only to gett Armes from uss, and to feede us with hopes till they were fully provided.

'My Lord Clifford sent woarde this morning to the King, that the inhabitants of Carlile had left the towne uppon a fright they tooke of the Highlanders coming suddenly uppon them, but hee has putt 300 men into the towne and they saye they are resolved to fight it out. The Hilanders are in number 2,500 and 6 cannon as they heare; we cannot heare wheather my lord of Essex bee in Barwick or not, by to-morrow wee shall know; heere is this day gone from this

country 2,000 men to second him. My Lord Trequare, the Treasurer of Scotland came last night to towne; & is this day confined to his chamber, wee expect some others may heare of it to, that I will not name for the King has been basly betrayed . . . and we shall all smart for it; saye little of this to the woemen least it fright them. . . . I heare noething of my Armes. Commend me to honest Natt Hubbard & the god of heaven bless you; remember to see Gorhambury as soon as you can; if Nodd Sidenham bee not on his waye . . . acquaint him with what I have writt: tell him and Charles Gawdy that I could wish they were boath heere, for the King has few about him, and that is a shame to uss all at this time when beleove mee the danger is more then is apprehended, ther wher you are. I hope you have sent awaye my waggon. My man Peeter and I are parted; if hee comes to lundun bee not deccaved by any false message; write privately as much to Roades. The King goes to see the fortifications at Hull on Thursday next.'

Lady Verney was still in London; she writes to her mother that 'they have stopped all passages soe that the King can ^{April 6, 1639.} send no certain intelligence of their proceedings; all our frindes are gone out of towne and when my sister [just secretly married] is gon to, I know not what to do, but my hope is that you wilbe so good as to send her to me again.'

Young Edmund and Dr. Denton were also with the army, the former having volunteered for the King's service, and the latter, being appointed Court physicion on the Scotch expedition, is allowed his food and house-room and 6s. 8d. a day.

Sir Edmund writes: 'I am now taking horse for ^{April 25, 1639.} Durham: my things are all gone & I must follow; . . . Notwithstanding my haste I will give you some tutch of news. Yesterday the King received a letter from . . . the lords of the covenant; I thinck ther was 20 of theyr hands to it; my Lord of Essex sent it sealed upp as he receaved it to the king, but . . . they sent a cobby of it open; to the intent if my lord made any scruple of receaving it, yet the messenger might read it to my Lord . . . First they

express great civillity to my lord ; and they seeme to wonder that a man soe well affected to the peace & wellfare of his country will appeare in such a waye, as he does in this business ; and they wonder that ther is such unusuall preparations for warr in England, . . . protesting that they never had a thought of offering the least iniury to this kingdome, that they have often represented theyr greevances to his Ma^{ty} & by reason of some ill-minded men of theyr nation can obtaine noe answer. . . . They have done nothing but what is warranted by theyr laws & they conclude with a great desire of Amity & peace with this kingdome, adding that if they bee invaded they must & will defend themselves & ther lybertys as long as ther is a man living amongst them. All thes hedds are in the letter : but in my oppinion they are exprest with a great deale of modesty, yett my lord Generall, (who is tender of the honor of the King) thincks it full of insolence & braving the King ; in breefe I feare it will rather exasperate then mollify, and add fewell to that fyre that raged inoughe before ; trewly I thinck it will come to blowes, but you must not saye soe to your mother. . . . I have not yett seene my armor for it is att Newcastle ; but I beleeve ther is never a long Gauntlett sent . . . lett Hill make one with all the speede he can possibly ; for it will kill a man to serve in a whole Curass. I am resolved to use nothing but back, brest, and Gauntlet : if I had a Pott for the Hedd that were Pistoll prooffe it maye bee I would use it if it were light ; but my whole Hellmett will bee of noe use to mee at all.' He hopes 'there will be some shippes coming dayly to Newcastle for coales, by some of them you must send it with an extreordinary charge to deliver it with all speede. . . . Say noething of this Gauntlett to y^{or} mother ; it maye give her causeless fears.' He thanks 'Mary, Nance, Doll, & honest Natt for their kind letters but trewly I can write to none of them, my best love to them all. The Lord God of Heaven bless you. Your louing father.'

The number of horses required on a campaign, not only for Sir Edmund's own riding but for carrying the necessary equipment, was very difficult to supply. His nag Tipping is

obliged to go into good grass and to be sold when he is fat. 'I pray lett the like bee done with the Bay Gelding I bought at Knights Bridg. I was extreamly cussend in that bargaine; my Gelding Goodwin is here but I feare hee will never recover & one of my waggon Horsos was spoyled by the waye heather & I am foarst to buy another.'

During April the King continued at York, but on the 29th he started north, sleeping at Raby Castle, which belonged to his treasurer of the household, Sir Henry Vane; the next day he reached Durham, where he was received by Bishop Morton, and some enthusiasm was shown. Not long before he most unwisely tried to exact an oath from all persons in his service that they would fight in the King's cause 'to the utmost of my power and hazard of my life,' and Lord Saye and Sele (who had married an aunt of Lady Verney) and Lord Brooke positively refused, whereupon the two Puritan lords were both imprisoned. The condition of the army was very bad, as Sir Edmund's letter shows. He begins by saying that he should not dare to write at all except by private messenger, 'for I feare many of my letters ^{May 1,} are not come to y^{or} hands, or if they have yett I beleieve ^{1639.} they have been opened, . . . for now wee have gotten that curiosity here to examin who sends news to lundon, . . . because I am confident of this bearer, I will tell you trewly how I conceive things goes here. Our Army is but weake; our Purce is weaker; and if wee fight with thes foarces & early in the yeare wee shall have our throats cutt; and to delaye fighting longe wee cannott for want of monny to keepe our Army togeather. my lord marshall [Lord Arundel] putts on the king to fight by all the wayes & means he can possibly devise; dayly urging the king how nearly it concerns him in honor to punish the rebells, telling that they are weake; . . . then the king is perswaded to it toe from Whithall [by the queen] with all the industry that can be inagind. the Catholiks makes a large contribution as they pretend and indeed use all the meanes and wayes they can to sett us by the Ears; & I thinck they will not faile of theyr plott. I dare saye ther was never soe Raw, soe un-

skilfull & soe unwilling an Army brought to fight. My lord marshall himselfe will, I dare saye, bee safe, & then he cares not what becomes of the rest; trewly here are manny brave Gentlemen that for poynt of honor must runn such a hazard as trewly would greeve any heart but his that does it purposly to ruine them. for my owne parte I have lived till paine and trouble has made mee weary to doe soe; and the woarst that can come shall not bee unwellcome to mee; but it is a pittie to see what men are like to bee slaughterd heere unless it shall pleas god to putt it in the kings Hearte to increase his Army or staye till thes may knowe what they doe; for as yett they are as like to kill theyr follows as the enemye.' 'Heere has beene a whisper of an accomodation betweene uss & the Scots, but I see noe hope of it.' He then writes about his money affairs and says he is 'extream weary . . . & it is 3 of the clock in the morning, att which time I am very sleepy'; and then comes a postscript: 'My lord Saye is att liberty & gone home; ther was never soe weake a thing done as the comittment of that man.'

May 3,
1639.

Next comes a letter from Dr. Denton to Ralph, alarming him about his father's 'warlike propensities': 'Ralph, wee have noe neede of foolinge, wee have an enough of that here; if the wisest were not a little guilty of it, wee might bee happier then now wee are likly to be. Yr ffather is as he useth to be for matter of health, his wisdome I feare begins to fayle him. I pray God the event doe not proove it by exposinge himselfe to more daunger then he needes. my iourney to Barwick hath not yett given mee leasure to be sicke; when I goe that way againe I much suspect my entertainment both for health and quiettnesse. I pray buy me Dr. Read his treatise of wounds and send it to me as soone as you can; it is a thinn booke in 4°, & if it be only stitched it will be noe more than 2 quire of paper. . . . when wee are over past Newcastle, you must looke for noe more letters from yr assured lovinge uncle . . . I comitt the distribution of love & service to yr disposall.' The demand from the doctor for a treatise on wounds must have been little reassuring to his friends at home. Sir Edmund writes:

'A little time now will discover what I am unwilling to beleve till I must needes; but this daye I spake with an understanding Scottshman & one that is affected the moderate waye; hee is confident noething will satisfye them but taking awaye all Bishoppes; & I dare saye the king will never yeelde to that, soe wee must bee miserable; the quorell is allmost begun already for this daye news is come that marquis Hamilton has taken fower scotch shippes.'

Dr. Denton's alarming hints had borne fruit, and Ralph replied immediately in great tribulation, entreating him to do his best to keep Sir Edmund back: 'Oh Dr if my father goes to the Borders he is lost, I know his corrage will bee his distruction; noe man did ever soe willfully ruine himselfe & his posterity; god forgive him and grant me patience; certainly his hart is more then stone, or else hee could not soe soone forget both freinds & Wife & children, & all to get (that which he can never loose) honour, should hee spend all his time in contriving which way hee might make us most miserable, hee could not invent a readdier cource then this. Did he beget us to noe other end but to make us the sad spectacles of the world? Will noething moove him? Deare Dr: try, & try againe & set all his freinds uppon him, be more then earnest, night & Day perswade him, give him noe rest till hee hath yeilded to stay. I can say noe more, this greife's to greate to bee expressed by your unhappy kinsman.'

He writes to his father in the same tone of passionate entreaty. 'I find by Nat Hoberts letter that you meane (voluntarily) to attend my Lord Holland to the Borders (though many others stay with the Kinge, that have farr lesse reason) for Sr you know your yeares, your charge, your distracted fortune, your former life, were priviledge enough to keepe you Back, without the least staine to your reputation; you may easily guesse how this afflicts mee, for if you goe, (knowinge your forwardness) I shall never thinke to see you more, but with grieve confesse that never man did more wilfully cast away himselfe.—Till now

May 5,
1639.May 10,
1639.May 10,
1639.

I never had the least reason to suspect your affection. But when I see you thus hastily run to your owne ruine, and as it were purposely to loose that life that is soe much dearer to mee then my owne, how can I thinke you love mee? hath the vaine hope of a little fading Honour swallowed up all your good nature? are your compassions quite shut up? will neither the numberlesse sighs of your dearest friends, nor the uncessant cries of your forlorne widdow, nor the mournfull groanes of your fatherlesse Brood prevaile to stay you? are you absolutely resolved by this on act, to blot all your former? and (by needlesse hazardinge your selfe) expose your wife, and children to perpetuall misery, and intaile afflictions uppon your whole posterity. I beseech you consider it and bee not soe egere to make your selfe & us (your unhappy children) the very objects of pittie it selfe, pardon my boldnesse, it concerns mee neerly; should I now bee silent, perhaps heerafter 'twould bee too late to speake, therefore let mee once more beseech you to consider this seriously, and give not the world soe just cause to account me your most unfortunate sonne.'

In answer to these remonstrances Sir Edmund replies quietly and affectionately: 'My designe of goeing to the Borders with my lord of Holland had only matter of kindness, none of danger in it. yett because it might seeme soe to my frends I was desirous they might not know it, but that designe was putt off and now wee are all goeing theather wher I desire you to putt soe much trust in mee as to beleeve I will not willfully thrust myself in danger, nor will I thinke you could wish mee to leave any thing undone when it falls to my turne to bee in Action. Raphe I thanck you for yo^r good advice; it has boath exprest yo^r Judgment & affection & I praye lett mee intreat you to beleeve I will neyther seeke my ruine nor avoyde any hazard when that little Honor I have lived in maye suffer by it, but trewly I thinke wee are not in much danger of fighting

'Commend me to Dr Cragg & tell him he is a churle for not wrighting all this while, I will never wright above

a letter or two heerafter for uppon my credditt it is now almost three of the clock. . . . Commend mee to yo^r wife. . . . God bless you boath.'

He is afraid that many of his letters are 'gotten into ill hands . . . trewly I have never failed sending twice a week at least. . . . I shall not wright often now for we shall goe into the feeld presently, nay the King himself & all his Army after we go out of this towne [Newcastle] will lodg in the feelds every night & noe man must looke into a village.' He has received all his arms, 'but praye hast awaye my pott & take care itt bee wide inoughe for this is soe much to little that noe boddy but a madd man could have beene soe madd as to mistake soe grosly, therfore take care it bee wide inoughe now ; . . . this afternoone there is newes come for certaine that 2,000 Scotts are come within ten mile of Barwicke, they saye 8,000 more is coming after them & 2,000 more are gone to lye neare Carlile ; we shall soone have blowes now, but I beleeve it will be skirmishes with the Hors & noe Battle till towards the end of sumer, it is folly to thinck any longer of a peace, we shall bee suddenly ingaged now.' In the next letter : 'I have tryed my Armes & the Hedd pecece is verry much to little for mee ; if the Pott I expect dayly from Hill [the Armourer] bee soe too I am undone ; I praye send to him about it assoone as you receive this l^r ; this will come uppon noe part of my hedd it is so very little ; the rest of my Armes are fitt. . . . As I was thus farr in my l^r my lord chamberlaine [Lord Pembroke] sent for mee and tould mee the sadd newes of sweete M^{rs} Henslowes Death ; desireinge me to breake it to her father [Sir William Uvedale] ; trewly I cannott express my greefe for the loss of her ; shee was one that I had an extraordinary esteeme for, & to whos love I owe much ; I have now lost her, if shee had lived a few weeks longer shee mought have lost mee.' Anne Uvedale was a special favourite at Claydon. She married in 1635 Thomas Henslowe, of Boarhunt, Hants, connected with the Verneys through the Poles. Sir Ralph wrote to Dillon the next year, 'your sister Nan . . . is the joyfull mother of a brave

May 11,
1639.

boy,' and Dillon's kindness to her is mentioned. Her husband with Lord Wilmot was ready to shelter Charles II. after the battle of Worcester; her son Thomas lived till 1677 and left three daughters.

MAY 16,
1639.

Dr. Denton seems anxious to keep his friends at home well frightened about Sir Edmund, in which he entirely succeeds. In his next letter he says that he will not thank Ralph for his book until he sends him 'a paire of barbinge sissers; . . . y^r father is yett well in body & att a good distance from the borders. the King goeth towards Barwicke on Thursday next & intends to intrench himselfe wthin 5 or 6 miles of it, but on this side Twecede & soe long as he keepes there I presume we shall be in safety.' He hopes that the King will not fight this summer, but will tempt the Scotch to bring out their forces, and by that means exhaust them, 'but I feare he will be cozoned for I booleve that they be as cunnige as they be wicked. The newes of there beinge 12,000 in a body wthin fore miles of Barwick is false; this is the best cordiall that I can send you at this distance. Be confident that I will leave noe stone unmoved that I conceive may knock y^r ffathers fightinge designes on the head & preserve him; if I can but keepe him from goinge out in parties, I hope he will returne wth safety. I shall be very sensible of any the least hazard that I shall thinke he may be in & if all the witt & power that I have, or can make, may prevent it, it shall be noe fault of y^r assured lovinge uncle.'

MAY 19
1639.

There are constant letters from Sir Edmund during this anxious time. 'Every hower now produces eyther something that is new or some alteration of our former resolutions; the King maks all the hast with this little Army into the feeld that possibly he can; . . . he has sent for 8,000 men more with all speede; Lasly threatens to fight uss, but if hee comes not quickly, he slipps a faire occation, for when we are intrencht and thes men come to uss wee shall not much feare him which now wee doe, for if he bee able to bring 10,000 men to uss any time thes twelve dayes beleve mee we are in verry ill case. My lord

of Holland is not yett come . . . we beleeeve hee is in Scotland; for hee was mett at Barwick, but noeboddy heere seemes to know any such thing; wee have had two of the coaldest dayes heere that ever I felt, and I feare if it continues it will kill our men that must lodg uppon the grownd without anything over them any time thes tenn dayes.'

Sir Edmund inquires for the unfortunate steel cap in every letter; Ralph had found it too small, and ordered another. 'Raphie, as it falls out I am verry sorry you were soe curious to try the Pott, for an ill one had been better than none. I doubt it maye come to late now, yett when it is done send it awaye by the first shipp. . . . All the Army except the privy chamber men, is marcht awaye to the Rendezvous, which is within fower miles of Barwick; to morrow the King removes and will bee ther the next daye if noothing happens to change his resolution; I am instantly goeing to view the grownd and place his tent reddy against he comes; my lord of Holland has beene thes six dayes uppon the Border; and till now the Scotts have not been secne in any great number, though we have often heard of great Armys coming towards uss . . . some are of oppinion that they are a little devided since the Proclamation; for it is certaine the covenanters has forbidden any man to read it uppon paine of Death; and this it is conceaved stumbles manny that are misled by an implicitt faith.' He then describes a little encounter between 'some dussen troopers of Mr. Goering' with a party of the Scotch, one of whom was killed; 'this is the first bludd has beene drawne in the busines, if more must bee lost in this unhappy quarrell, I praye God it maye bee at the same rate.'

Sir Edmund's next letter is labelled 'Leslys pride.' They were now encamped within two miles of Berwick, and had seen no encmy as yet; 'we heare lasly is within 12 miles . . . wee fiend all the meaner sort of men uppon the scotch Border well inclyned to the King and I beleeeve when time serves they will express it well; but the Gentlemen are all covenanters, and I beleeeve most men are weary of the government ther now, for they lay Heavy

Burdens uppon the people. . . . in earnest the King is most willing to suffer much rather then have a warr, soe that I hope it will prove a peace. Lasly has now the title of Soverain amonst them, and the best lord amongst them sitt att a great distance below him, and under a lord noe man putts on a Hatt in his presence; all the Government of the warr is comitted to him and of the state to, which is to mee verry strange; we heare the man is soe transported with this greatness that he gives offence to all the Nobillity, and I beleeve they will desire a peace to free themselves of him againe. I have beene heere this three dayes in the camp ordering of things ther for the Kings coming tomorrow to lodg ther.'

June 9,
1639.

'Raphe, I knowe you long to heare what wee are doeing heere and I have as great a desire still to informe you and therfor I faill not to wright to you by every safe messenger if I have any leysure for it. Wee are still at great quiett; the Scottish Army which is verry strong lyes now within six miles of ours; the lords of the covenant have petitioned the King that they maye represent theyr complaints and greevances by some of the English nobillity.

. . . His M^{ty} has assented to thyr petition and has assigned six of our lords to meete with as manny of theyrs att our lord Generalls Tent in our campe; they have petitioned for an assurance under the King's hand, for theyr safe returne, but hee refuses it and sayes they shall trust to his woard; this difficulty lyes yett in the waye, but I assure myselfe ther will bee a waye found to satisfye them in that. . . . Uppon theyr petition to the Kinge I was sent by his M^{ty} with a message to them wherein thoughe I had a hard parte to playe yett I dare bouldly saye I handled the business soe that I begott this treaty; otherwise wee had I doubt beene at blowes by this time; but I praye take noe notice of this unless you heare it from others.' He ends with a pretty message to 'your good wife and give her my blessing, which I send her with as good a will as ever I askt any.' 'Sir Edmund Verney was known,' says Baillie, 'to be a lover of our nation, and acceptable to the Scotch people,' and was

therefore the right man for this embassy. Sir John Temple relates that 'the Scots then assembled their cheife commanders, and gave way to Sir Edmund Verney to read the King's message openly in the army.'

Sir Edmund writes again: 'This daye the lords on boath sides have had a meeting; the King, contrary to expectation, went into the Tent to them as they begann to enter into theyr business, but I thinck it will not hurt the business; the King heard them with patience, and answered with great moderation.'

June 11,
1639.

Sir Edmund had been with Lord Holland in the failure at Kelso, and Dr. Denton is most gloomy: 'Raphe, the very next day after I writt to you, y' ffather was one of the 800 horsemen that were in a very faire way to be all cutt off, for pistolls and carabins were all cocked, swords drawne, and trumpetts goinge to mouth, which had sounded had not some in the interim spied forces in an ambush, wh^{ch} made them to make an honourable retreat, since wh^{ch} time they have petitioned the Kinge; your ffather hath caried messages to and fro, and this day English and Scotch nobility meete, and we are in great hope of an honourable peace; if not your ffather, havinge quartered himselfe with my L. of Holland, he will be almost in every daunger, and now noe pswasions can remove him thence, but I beleeve he will never stirr but wth my L. . . . I am 14 miles from the campe with my L. Chamberlaine, who hath had an agew, wh^{ch} left him yesterday, and soe I hope to be att the campe againe tomorrow.' Four days after Sir Edmund writes: 'everything is agreed on, and Monday appoynted for a full conclusion; the King has promist them a new assembly; and to rattifye in parlament anything that shall be agreed on in theyr assembly. They insisted much uppon a rattification of theyr last assembly, but the King would not yeeld to it; more particulars I have not time to send you, nor doe I thinck yo' curiosity is soe greate, but that the news of peace will sattisfye it; but now wee must travell to Edenboroughe to the assembly and parlament; soe that though we have peace wee shall have noe quiett a great

June 11,
1639.

June 15,
1639.

while . . . I heare noething of my Pott from hill ; I will now keepe it to boyle my porrage in '—he does not forget the venison for one man and the protection for another—' I am suer y^r mother will easily excuse my not writing since I send soe good news of peace.' On June 18, 1639, peace was declared and the Treaty of Berwick signed.

There had been a quarrel between Lord Newcastle and Lord Holland, the former having considered himself insulted by being placed in the rear of one of the expeditions. Holland complained to the King, who took the part of Newcastle ; and there the quarrel rested till the army was disbanded. Lord Newcastle then challenged Lord Holland, who chose Sir Edmund Verney as his second, but the King, having heard of it, put Holland under arrest, and when Newcastle and his second, Francis Palmes, 'a man of known courage and metal,' presented themselves on the field, Sir Edmund came alone to explain ; Newcastle was soon afterwards also put into custody, and then the King made peace between the belligerents.

June 21,
1639.

'The king has stayed heere in the feeld,' Sir Edmund writes, 'to see his Army sent awaye . . . Assoone as I can find a resolution of his stay heere, I purpose to aske leave to returne . . . Let Will Roads presently inquier out some grass for geldings, for I have bought 50 Horses and Geldings out of one Troope ; and they will bee at Claydon about 10 dayes hence ; the Horses I will keep at Howse till I can sell them. I hope to see my frends so shortly I wright to none of them.' Mary is to choose him 'some patterns of cloath for a sute of clothes, for I shall have occation to make some the next daye after I come to lundon.' Dr. Denton writes to Ralph after Sir Edmund has started south, about a foolish report made by 'one Cunningham' to the Queen 'that all our men runne away from Kelsay of w^{ch} number y^r ffather was ; a relation so distastefull to all that were there, that he will be in noe quiett untill he hath fought with them all.' But Sir Edmund had more important business to get through than to fight duels in defence of a courage none who knew him had ever doubted, and nothing more is

heard of Cunningham. He made old Lady Denton forget herself and her grievances by paying her a visit. 'I was so overjoyed to see him safe come home, that I was not myself.'

Sir Edmund was soon after at Bath; he was suffering much from sciatica, and the long journey, going round by London, must have been extremely trying. He was joined by his son Ralph, but the short time which he was able to be away from the King afforded him little chance of relief. Within a month he had returned to his duties at Berwick, whence he writes about 'warrants for Bucks, from Windsor in the great park,' etc.

The extraordinary uncertainties of Charles's mind appear by the perpetual changes in his intentions; a fortnight after Sir Edmund's return (so that the smallest consideration from the King might have saved him two long and painful journeys), he left Berwick for London, accompanied by Sir Edmund, riding the whole way in four days. There were great rejoicings in England for 'the blessedness we heare of Pease,' as Lady Sussex writes; the Cavalier poets broke out into the most extravagant congratulations; Cowley wrote a pompous ode on his Majesty's return out of Scotland: July 28,
1639.

Welcome, great sir, with all the joy that's due
To the return of peace and you. . . .
The armour now may be hung up to sight,
And only in their halls the children fright.

But the armour was scarce hung up before it was taken down again; and in a few months the war with Scotland was renewed—'the second Bishops' War,' as it was called. Edmund was sent to Flanders, and his father writes letters to Captain Apsly and Captain Homwood for the young soldier to take with him; 'they will gett him assistance and directions what to do. He had best land at Flushing and soe goe directly to the Army.'

Sir Edmund found much troublesome business of his own and other people's awaiting him in the south. He

spent part of the autumn at Bath, accompanied by Ralph ; he was suffering and anxious, and behind all private troubles lay the thought of the probability of a renewal of the Scotch war, which must have been as painful to Sir Edmund as to his namesake son, who wrote in the winter from Utrecht : 'I heare that the King hath vast summes of money given him by his subjects, and that these forces are lyke to goe against Scotland ; the former part I wish to be true, but shall ever pray against the latter.'—So ended the year 1639

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VERNEYS IN PARLIAMENT.

THE Verneys were a very Parliamentary family. Sir Ralph Verney, as before mentioned, was member for London in 1472, and from that time there was seldom wanting a representative of the name for the county of Bucks, or for one of its five boroughs, always on what would now be called the 'liberal' side in politics.

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|--|
| Edward VI. | 1552. | Sir Edmund Verney for Buckinghamshire, and Francis Verney, Esq., for the town of Buckingham. |
| Philip and Mary | 1556. | Sir Edmund Verney and Francis Verney, Esq., for Bucks. |
| James I. | 1624. | Sir Edmund Verney (on his return with Prince Charles from Spain) for Buckingham. |
| Charles I. | 1628. | Sir Edmund Verney (Knight Marshal) for Aylesbury. |
| Charles I. | 1640. | Sir Edmund Verney for Wycombe, and Ralph Verney, Esq., for Aylesbury (the Short Parliament). |
| Charles I. | 1640. | Sir Edmund Verney for Wycombe, and Sir Ralph Verney for Aylesbury (the Long Parliament). |
| Charles II. | 1680. | Sir Ralph Verney, Bart., for Buckingham. |
| James II. | 1684. | Sir Ralph Verney for Buckingham. |
| William and Mary | 1688-89. | Sir Ralph Verney for Buckingham (Convention Parliament). |
| Anne | 1710. | Sir John Verney, Bart., for Buckinghamshire. |
| Anne | 1713. | Sir John Verney, Lord Fermanagh, for Amersham. |
| George I. | 1714. | Viscount Fermanagh for Amersham. In his place deceased, Ralph Verney, Viscount Fermanagh. |

- George I. 1722. Ralph Verney, Viscount Fermanagh, for Amersham.
- George II. 1735. Ralph Verney, Viscount Fermanagh, for Wendover.
- George II. 1747. Ralph Verney, 1st Earl Verney, for Wendover.
- George II. 1754. Ralph Verney, 2nd Earl Verney, for Wendover.
- George III. 1768. Ralph Verney, 2nd Earl Verney, for Buckinghamshire.
- George III. 1790. Ralph Verney, 2nd Earl Verney, for Buckinghamshire.

Sir Harry Verney, second baronet, carried on this tradition, and when in 1885 the borough of Buckingham was disfranchised after a life of 340 years its last (as nearly its first) member was a Verney. Sir Harry Verney, fourth baronet, sat for North Buckinghamshire, 1910–1918. The previous family of Verneys had represented Buckinghamshire in eighteen parliaments.

April 13,
1640.

When the Short Parliament met in 1640, Sir Edmund and Ralph were sitting together for the first time, the former for Wycombe, the latter for Aylesbury. Lord Fermanagh sets down: ‘Sir Edmund Verney and Thomas Lane were returned to serve Burgesses for y^e towne of Wiccam in Com: Bucks, by y^e maior, Aldermen, Bayliffs and Burgesses being to y^e number of 53, under y^e towne seale, with 36 names inscribed to that indenture; & 30 other inhabitants, not being Burgesses or free men, have returned Henry Bulstrode and Adrian Scrope, but not by y^e sheriffe.’ Sir Edmund’s seat, however, does not seem to have been contested, and he sat without further question.

It is unfortunate that, as Sir Edmund and his son were living in Covent Garden, and both the Lady Verneys were with their husbands, there were no letters between them. So little is known about the Short Parliament that Ralph’s ‘Notes’ would have been very valuable. There are no foul copies either of the letters which he wrote to Lady Sussex every few days; they were probably destroyed as dangerous.

‘It could never be hoped that more sober and dispassionate men would ever meet again in that place, or fewer who brought ill purposes with them,’ is Clarendon’s

verdict on the members. They met, indeed, in a spirit determined to have their grievances redressed, but were 'favourably disposed towards the king's service.'

When the Short Parliament had been roughly dissolved, May 1640. the centre of interest shifted from Westminster to the north. Edmund Verney was sent under Sir T. Culpepper against the Scotch. He had complained of the apathy of the English soldiers in Flanders about everything outside their own profession: he had a very different experience in this campaign. Politics and religion were fiercely discussed over every camp fire, and the men were mounting guard upon the orthodoxy of their officers. Lieutenant Eure, a Catholic, who refused to accompany his men to church, was murdered in Somersetshire.

'My souldyers and I are now att one,' Edmund writes, July 1640. ' & indeede never had any greate difference above twice, the cheife of which I writt at large to my father the last weeke. For my goeing to church 3 times in a day it was true, but it was rather my own doings to give them satisfaction that I was noe papist then any compulsion of theires, but once that day I a little nodded at church, & had it been a minute longer truely I doe thinke I had been pulled by the nose, for the souldyers pointed extreemely at me, & the same day pulled up a Captaine of my lord Newport's regiment to the byshop's altar, but theire communion table, and made him receive, when scarcee any of them would receive with him. Here is noe newes but that the county of Yorke takes this billeting of the souldyer upon them much to heart, and though they doe it upon a kind of compulsion, yet are they resolv'd never to yeeld to it, least the president of it might for ever be a prejudice to theire posterity.'

After the reverse at Newburn he writes from York—'On Sept. 10, 1640. the march we have noe time at all & at New-Castle we were so busy both by day and night, we scarcee had 3 houres rest in a 24 all the time we stayde there & since we have been noe lesse hastily employ'd in running away. That we were beaten you have heard, and for the circumstances they

are reported soe various that I know not which to write to you for a trueth; this is certaine, that if Lasley had pursued his victory he had cutt us all of; buisnesses were very ill managed by some, for we had neither caannon nor ammunition by us, but went on lyke sheepe to the slaughter. I believe we shall have peace, but if we have not I hope wee shall have better doings, or else we are surely beaten againe, and then I know not what part of the kingdome can or at least will hinder theire march whither they please. Boyse & I have lost all we have & soe have many more, it hath undon me if warr breake off . . . My father is dayly expected here . . . wish us better success & anything but peace.'

Sept. 25,
1640.

'The King doth soe much sympathise with the Lords that he tells them if they will have him disband his army tomorrow he will doe it, but as God would have it they very nobly and most unanimously all cryed noe, but yet I feare twelve months is the longest.' . . . 'Judge you whether this dolefull newes of disbanding is not enough to kill a poore man that is allready undone by the losse of all that ever he had at Newcastle; assoone ass ever I come home expect me singing Good your worship cast your eye on a poore souldyer's misery, and then your liberality will be very wellcome to your most beggerly Brother Edmund Verney.'

'For newes, all that is now is of warr, for the Scots contrary to your opinion I am sure [this is a hit at Ralph's political leanings] are very unreasonable, they ask no lesse then 40,000*l*. for a month's longer treaty but we have a company of noble lords that vow to pay them in leaden coyne.'

Oct. 15,
1640.

'Unlesse the Scotts have shreived me to the skinn, tis impossible they should have left me poorer . . . Well may I say with Byas omnia mea mecum porto . . . See the uncertainty of this world, the other weeke peace, the last weeke warre, and now peace again . . . the plague is soe violent amongst the Scots that they are much weakened . . .

Oct. 28,
1640.

Farewell and believe the proverb of me, though poore yet honest & your truely loving brother.' 'Tomorrow morning

I march away from Yorke, and shall lye within a mile or 2 of Rippon.'

'I have lately been at New-castle where Lasly us'd me but indifferent kindly, for he bid me twice or thrice get me about my buisnes, but that was because I did not stile him his excellency, but indeede I found infinite civillity from the Earle of Ancram's sonn the Earle of Lodyan' [Lothian], 'who assured me he had sent one truncke up safe to my father. I may well say, out of the roade out of the world, for I have neither heard from you nor could send to you these 5 weekes.'

Dec. 10,
1610.

Meanwhile the Long Parliament had met, and Sir Edmund for Wycombe, and Ralph for Aylesbury, took their seats among 'the 460 tyrants who rule over us,' as the young soldier irreverently styled the M.P.s. He had no reason to love them—'This I will say for you of the Parliament, you are the worst paymasters I know . . . We have 6 weekes due to us & unlesse there bee some speedy course taken for the payments you may well expecte to heare that all our souldyers are in a mutiny to the ruine of the country, for they are notable sheepe stealers already.'

Jan. 15,
1611.

'I beleeeve you are buisyed in the parlyament and yet neglect the mayne busines of supplying the army, the effect of which with the terrible threatening musters may very well produce strange things, even not to be named. The horse have sent theire peremptory answere that they will not muster till they are payde; if the foote doe the lyke, beleeeve me it can tend to noe lesse than a generall mutiny. A worne will turne agayne if it be trod on. Souldiers are now used ass though it were sure there should never be farther use of them. Apes have bitts and bobs, but we have bobs without bits.¹ If it hold thus but a fortnight longer, you will have a letter in way of petition to redresse our greevances or to cashiere us. There are divers officers that owe us much ass their pay comes to, and are put to such shifts, that it is hard to say whether it goes hardest with them or the

Mar. 1611.

¹ 'To be treated like apes, with bobs and bits,' i.e. to be tantalised, occurs frequently; 'bob' seems to be a blow, and 'bit' a bite of food.

common souldyer. What foul dishonour is this to uss in our owne nation. I commend my humble sute to you and the rest of the 460 Kings who sit at Westminster to have regard to the honour of us souldyers.'

Ralph, who was soon afterwards knighted, was now twenty-seven, and, except during the three weeks of the Short Parliament, he had had no experience of Parliamentary life. It is always an epoch in a man's career when first he enters the walls of that great assembly, where the very heart of the nation may be felt to beat; a proud moment when first he finds himself among the representatives chosen by the great English people to do the work of its government, and Ralph was one to experience this feeling in its full force. The importance of the right use of their power at this critical juncture, the momentous issues that hung upon their every decision, must have made it no light task for so conscientious a man to join in the deliberations of the House of Commons in the Long Parliament of 1640.

'There they sat, courtier and Puritan, the pick and choice of the gentlemen of England, by birth, by wealth, by talents the first assembly in the world,' says Forster, and Buckinghamshire was represented by some of the best of them. There is a sheet of paper in the Claydon muniment-room whereon twelve of the names of its members are 'faire writ for sport' by themselves, Hampden's firm round hand very conspicuous among the signatures.

Lady Sussex writes: 'Now you will be taken up for your great affairs. i pray God it may be a happy Parlyment to us all. When you have any idell time i pray let me have sometimes a lyne or to from you—and i will send you some bisket to put in your pokete and jhelly to comfort you up, as sone as my woman is in tune to make it.' The inconveniences of the House were so great and the hours so long that Lady Sussex's pocket provisions were doubtless very welcome; the cakes are to be 'tosted.'

At the very outset of the Long Parliament the King met with a rebuff. He had desired to propose Sir Thomas

Gardiner, Recorder of London, as Speaker; but the City refused to elect him as one of their members, choosing to be represented by four Puritans. Lenthall was then selected by the House, and proved himself to be an ideal Speaker.

Lenthall's brother, Sir John, married a first cousin of Ralph's mother; Sir Thomas Gardiner's son was about to marry his sister Cary; indeed, the number of members with whom Ralph was connected by blood, marriage, or friendship was curiously large. His uncle, Sir Alexander Denton, was M.P. for Buckingham; Frank Drake, for Amersham; Nathaniel Piennes, another cousin, for Banbury; Hyde, his father's great friend, Sir John and his son Sir Roger Burgoyne, 'that trow friend,' and many of his country neighbours, including Chaloner the regicide, were all returned together. The precincts of the House were almost a home to Ralph, and he looked back to this time, during the remainder of his long life, with a sort of regretful affection.

An old print of this period represents the members with the broad felt hat and feather so associated with portraits of Charles himself—short cloaks, doublets, and hose, sitting on five rows of benches raised one above the other on each side of the floor of the House, as at present. The Speaker's chair, however, was a good way from the end and there were seats behind him.

The chamber was the same as that in which Sir Ralph's successor after two hundred years, Sir Harry Verney, sat just before it was burnt down in 1834. There was a large east window looking out on the Thames, and an opening from the House itself into Westminster Hall, which shared in the excitement of what was going on within, and where members walked up and down in the intervals of the debates.

The business of the House began so early in the day that it is difficult to understand how the Ministers found time for their official work. Lord Warwick, when begging for Ralph's presence at a Committee on the Posts in which he had business, apologises for asking him to be there by

seven in the morning; 'an unseasonable hour,' he calls it, as eight was the usual hour of assembling. They seem generally to have stopped before their midday meal; but as the times grew more and more anxious the sittings grew later, and Lord Clarendon remarks upon 'the House then keeping those disorderly hours and seldom rising till after four of the clock in the afternoon.'

There is an appeal from the Speaker just before the debate on the Grand Remonstrance, which, however, does not seem to have been much regarded, 'against the rush of members betwixt twelve and one midday, such that he was feigne to tell them they were unworthy to sit in this great and wise assembly that would so rush forth to their dinners.'

The difficulties of artificial light made it almost a necessity to confine the debates to daylight sittings. On one occasion, in June 1641, when discussing the army plot, 'it being dusk some members called for candles; the majority opposed the proposal, it being so very late,' but they were brought in by a mistake of the serjeant's. As he came in with them in his hands (the number carried by one man must indeed have been scanty for so large a chamber), he was commanded to withdraw, but two members seized them and bore them triumphantly into the House. There was a great uproar and the House adjourned. The culprits were imprisoned for six days in the Tower. No record of their debates was allowed by the Commons, and Sir Harry Vane once stopped an offender, saying he 'remembered when noe man was allowed to take notes, and wishes it to be now forbidden,' but in spite of this Sir Ralph in his careful, methodical way prepared to chronicle their proceedings: his notes are written in pencil on folded sheets of small foolscap paper, evidently held upon his knees and carried in his pocket. They are quoted as full of interest by Hallam, Forster, and Gardiner; and have been admirably edited for the Camden Society by Mr. John Bruce. He points out the haste with which the notes were jotted down, the erasures and alterations showing the changes in the subject matter during the progress of a

debate; the great jogs of the pencil as if some one in a full House pressed hastily against the writer's elbow, and the abrupt breaks when the speaker became too rapid for Sir Ralph to follow.

The tremendous earnestness of the debates is extremely striking. Their subjects were matters of life and death to both sides, politically in this world and concerning the chance of heaven and hell in the next. There does not appear to have been the smallest break in the stern solemnity of the speakers on both sides.

The only instance where the ghost of a smile could have been raised is treated in the severest style by Sir Ralph. A certain T. T., 'contrary to the custom of this House, doth ^{Jan. 3, 1641.} seate and place himselfe neare the Speaker's chaire, where non but Privy Councillours and men of distinction are wont to sit, to the great scandall of the House. The said T. T., in a loud and violent manner, and contrary to the custom & usage of Parliment, in the Speaker's [ear], at the putting of a question about the militia, standing neare the Speaker's chaire, cried "Baw!" to the great terror and affrightment of the Speaker and of the members of the House of Comons, and contrary to his duty and the trust reposed in him by his country.' It does not appear, however, who this delinquent was or what punishment was inflicted for his crime.

Sir Ralph's notes deal with many abuses from which this patient old country is not yet delivered, and point to many reforms not yet accomplished. In 1640 'Beere and tobacco' decide many elections, candidates 'unduly procure voyses by inviting to alehouses, etc.' It is desired 'that a grammar schole be maintained by every Cathedral church, students should be encouraged & noe bookes sould'; a free education to poor scholars seems to be aimed at; but the House having devoted an afternoon to hearing two learned divines arguing for and against the retention of the cathedral establishments, Sir Ralph notes that as to the advancement of learning, grammar schools are as good where there is no dean and chapter, and gives as instances, 'Eaton, Marchant Taylors,

& Sutton's Hospital' [Charterhouse]. They wish to utilise cathedrals, 'the first monuments of Christianity.' While in educational reform we are still striving to attain to the ideal of the Long Parliament, a degenerate age no longer wishes, as they did, to revive 'Local statutes to appoint sermons almost every day. Desier a spur in this'; they even discuss Church music with more interest than we should expect from our own House of Commons. 'Tis not edifying,' said Dr. Hackett, 'being soe full of art; but leave a solome musick.' Here their zeal was sadly misplaced, it was the golden age of English Church music, which was learned, dignified, and beautiful; but chants, anthems, and organs were soon to be ruthlessly swept away together. Music in its turn gives way to the grievances of the vintners, the abuses of the farmers of the customs, the intense excitement about the Army Plot, and the stirring debate upon the prosecution of Sir John Eliot, Selden, and others, for their conduct in the Parliament of 1629. 'Sir Ralph Verney's note of this case,' says Mr. Bruce, 'is a good specimen of his ability as a reporter. He tells the tale briefly but clearly, with legal precision and completeness, and not without one or two glances at the pathetic incidents which distinguished it.' For eight months these patriotic men were kept 'without use of pen, inke or paper,' and such was the rigour of their confinement that 'Eliot's casement being open, the lieutenant of the Tower was chidden.'

May 1641. During the debate on the Army Plot, Lady Sussex writes to Sir Ralph: 'it tis I confes too much after euch tedious dayes as you have, to right euch lettirs. This last wike it semes hath discoverde strange bissines; God hath bine infinety marsifull to this nasyone, in prefentinge still what hath bene intendede for our ruens, & i hope will still so keepe us that the enimes to religon, & so to us, will never have power; but that wee shall see the confusyon of many of them.'

The fiercest storms of debate rage round 'the Bishops for
June 1641. whose sake all these troubles are on us.' Sir Ralph writes: 'wee are soe bent to remove the B^{pp} from the House of

Peeres, that I conceive if it bee denied, wee shall doe our best endeavours to abolish them utterly as the Scotts have done.'

Lady Brilliana Harley, whose husband was Sir Edmund's colleague in the Long Parliament, wrote about the same time: 'I am glad that the Bischops begine to falle, & I hope it will be with them as it was with Haman; when he began to falle, he fell indeede.'

'The new ceremonies had put upon the Churches a shape and face of Popery'; the Bishops are said to be 'encumbered with temporall power & state affaires,' and that 'they engraft themselves into civill corporation.' Any trivial gossip is brought up against them: how they misquote Scripture in drinking toasts, to the scandal of the godly—how 'Bayley Bishopp of Bangor,' a saintly prelate ten years dead, 'sayd to the bishopp of Ely, "Eli, Eli, luma sabachthani heere is to thee a health"'—how 'the Bp. of Gloucester's men swore & daunce on Sundayes'; and how the same two prelates forbid to marry any that are not first confirmed—how 'Bishoppes confirme little children & old people,' and if confirmation be so universally necessary the Bishop 'perhapps will never bee at leasure,' a possibility well within the experience of our own day; as is also the fine phrase Sir Ralph quotes—'Bishopp is a name of duty and not of dignity.' But the sanctity of individual lives could not now avail to lay the storm which Laud and Strafford had raised.

On March 22 the trial of Lord Strafford opened. Sir Ralph's notes begin the next day, and he follows carefully the details of the prosecution till he is called away to attend his mother's death-bed. On April 10 he is back in his place, when there was a violent disagreement between the Lords and Commons; the latter withdrew in 'tumultuous confusion,' and Strafford could not hide his joy at the scene. Sir Ralph refers to the letters found in Sir Harry Vane's black cabinet, and the petition for Strafford's execution signed by 20,000 Londoners; the crowds without and the vehement excitement within the House are hinted at in disjointed and ill-written words noted down with difficulty.

May 8,
1641.

Jan. 19,
1641

The trial of Strafford had lasted eighteen days, and Sir Ralph records shortly that 'the Bill of Attainder passed.' 'Yon great lorde i hope will com to the honor of behedinge'; Lady Sussex wrote some months before the end, 'if he scape he will do more ill than ever was don. Your Parlyment makes many sade harts, i hope you will make this a happy kaindom before you have don; i am very glad of your nues, for we have much but littel true here'; and an allusion in another letter—'I pray God your hoses may agree, and that they may make an end of this great lorde'—shows how strong was the popular feeling against him.

April 15,
1641.

That the technical proofs of Strafford's treason were insufficient is evident, but it was surely well said that 'the man who seeks to subvert the national liberties must not escape because his offence hath not been properly defined.' 'How many haire breadths makes a tall man,' Sir Ralph quotes from Lord Falkland, ' & how many makes a little man, noe man can well say; yet wee know a tall man when we see him from a low man, soe 'tis in this, how many illegal acts makes a treason is not certainly well known but wee well know it when we see it.' 'I am glad justice is excicuted on my Lord Straford,' wrote Lady Brilliana Harley from Herefordshire, 'whoo I think dyed like a Seneca, but not like one that had tasted the mistery of godlyness. . . . the wicked flowreschess but for a time in his life, nor in his death has peace.'

There was a great shout of joy on Tower Hill as the axe fell; bonfires blazed, and the triumphant cries of an immense multitude hailed the death of the chief support of the King and his party.

In July 1641 Sir Ralph sat on a committee with Pym, Hampden, Sir Henry Vane, Sir John Hotham, Sir Nathaniel Fiennes, and others, to settle a curious and delicate piece of business. The Queen desired to take the Spa waters for the recovery of her health, 'which her Majesty alledged was much impaired by some discontents of mind and false rumours and libels spread concerning her.' She also wished to take to Holland her daughter Mary, who had been be-

trothed in person at ten years old to the Prince of Orange aged fourteen, in the midst of all the excitement of Strafford's trial. Her enemies contended that there was nothing the matter with her health, but 'that greate quantities of treasure are prepared to be transported' to raise troops for the King in France and Holland, and to intrigue in general with those diabolical enemies to God and man--'the Papists.'

Could an odder task be undertaken by some half-dozen English gentlemen than to determine, when the first lady in the land said that she was sick, whether her symptoms were feigned or genuine, and to settle for her the proprieties and decorums of her daughter's marriage?

The committee, nothing daunted, commanded the 'phisition to bee sworne'; it was not Dr. Denton this time, but Sir Theodore Mayerne, who had attended Prince Henry in his last illness. He would have been a miserable Court physician if he could not have proved that the Queen was seriously ill, when she desired to be so, and when the committee submitted to him that 'the water may as well come hither as to Utrik,' he was equal to the occasion; it was not a question of whether the water could be brought to London, he said, 'Spaw water is not fit for her at present, her body not being prepared' . . . 'any change of aire would doe her good, bee it what it will.' When told that the Queen specially desired to drink the waters, he admits that 'Shee hath a greate oppinion of the Spaw water,' that 'Waters have twice donn her good and Spaw water is better then the best waters in England.' But 'to cure her body, her mind must be quieted, the Queen is sick in body and in minde, and thinks shee cannot recover'; she must be 'out of reach of imployments that may disturbe her.' 'Shee believes she is very ill,' he is careful to lay some of the responsibility on the patient; 'unlesse remedies bee used she cannot live,' there should be no delay, this was the 14th of July, 'and the waters must be taken between this and the middle of August.'

Beaten on the question of health, the committee decided that, 'As it will bee a dishonour not to have the queen

attended as she should bee, so it will bee unsupportable to afford her so much cost as will support the journey.' As to the Princess Mary, Sir Ralph (honest man, whose own wife was betrothed to him as a child, and then brought up under his mother's roof) and his colleagues are horrified at the impropriety of the princess going under her mother's care to visit her future husband's family. They protest against 'the dishonour that may happen to this nation in respect the princess is not of years, and soe the match may breake, and she sent back with dishonour.'

The Queen bowed to the storm, and Sir Ralph reports her answer to the committee of both Houses which came with 'reasons to dissuade her.' She thanks them with ironical courtesy for 'there greate care of my health and for there affection to me'; she is ready 'at the hazard of my life' to forego the 'Spaw' water and the change of air to 'serve the Kinge and this kingdom,' and she apologises 'for the imperfectnesse of my English, I had rather have spoke in any other language, but I thought this would bee most acceptable.' When Henrietta Maria next determined to go abroad, in February 1642, she did not wait to consult her affectionate friends the Commons; she certainly did her best to justify all their previous objections to her leaving the country, but she took good care of her little daughter, whose education she superintended during the year she remained in Holland, and whom she left under the personal care of the Princess of Orange. 'At the age of fourteen she was fully installed in her conjugal position. She gave audiences, received foreign ambassadors, and fulfilled all functions of state with a gravity and decorum remarkable for her years' (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*).

Nov. 29,
1641.

On the King's return from Scotland and his splendid reception by the City, Lady Sussex writes to Sir Ralph: 'Your glorious show we have in printe; my thinkes the kainge should love his pepell of inglande best; for suer ther bonty and obedynce is most to him; i pray God sende your parlyment agree will; i am sory the kainge is gon to hamton court for ther will bee much time for ther pouerfull parswa-

syons ; my thinkes ther was littill shew of love to your hose to desier your garde should be dismist thes troublesom times ; i becech the god of heaven to bles and keepe you all safe from any filinus parties ; ther will bee much bisynes in your hose suer, now the kainge is com ; god's power is above all ; and i hope he will dierect you to do for the best, every way. Thow i am ever most glade at your lettirs i forbide them but when you have lesuer, for i know you can not but bee tyerde out ever day with bisynes.'

Sir Ralph had taken notes of many historic scenes, but the most thrilling moment of his parliamentary career was that in which he saw Charles enter the House to arrest the five members. Four independent accounts given by eye-witnesses have come down to us. The most detailed is that of Rushworth, a young clerk-assistant lately taken into the service of the House, who, in the midst of the intense excitement, went on steadily writing at the table. Sir Ralph's account written in much less comfort, on his knee, completes our knowledge of the details of that memorable day. 'The five gentlemen which were to bee
 Jan. 4,
 1642.
 accused cam into the house, and there was information that they should bee taken away by force. Uppon this, the house sent to the lord maior, aldermen, and common counsell to let them know how there priviledges were like to bee broken, and the citty put into dainger, and advised them to looke to there security.

'Likewise some members were sent to the four inns of court, to let them know, how they heard they were tampered withall to assist the king against them, and therfore they desierd them not to come to Westminster.

'Then the house adjorned till on of the clock.

'As soone as the house mett againe, 'twas moved, considering there was an intention to take these five men away by force, to avoyd all tumult, let them bee commanded to absent themselves. Uppon this, the house gave them leave to absent themselves, but entred noe order for it, and then the five gentlemen went out of the house.

'A little after, the kinge came, with all his guard, and all

his pentioners, and two or three hundred soldiers and gentlemen. The king comanded the soldiers to stay in the hall, and sent us word hee was at the dore. The speaker was commanded to sit still, with the mace lying before him, and then the king came to the dore, and tooke the palsgrave [his nephew] in with him, and comand all that cam with him, uppon their lives not to come in. So the dores were kept oppen, and the earle of Roxborough stood within the dore, leaninge uppon it. [This is a touch we have from Sir Ralph alone.] Then the kinge cam upwards, towards the chaire, with his hat off, and the speaker stepped out to meet him. Then the kinge stepped upp to his place, and stood uppon the stepp, but sate not down in the chaire. And, after hee had looked a greate while, hee told us, hee would not breake our priviledges, but treason had noe priviledge; hee cam for those five gentlemen, for hee expected obedience yesterday, and not an answer. Then hee calld Mr. Pim, and Mr. Hollis, by name, but noe answer was made. Then hee asked the speaker if they were heere, or where they were. Uppon that the speaker fell on his knees and desired his excuse, for hee was a servant to the house, and had neither eyes, nor tongue, to see or say anything but what they comanded him. Then the king told him, hee thought his owne eyes were as good as his, and then said, his birds were flowne, but hee did expect the house would send them to him, and if they did not hee would seeke them himselve, for there treason was foule, and such an on as they would all thanke him to discover. Then hee assured us they should have a faire trial, and soe went out, putting off his hat till hee came to the dore.'

The scene over, 'the Commons at once adjourned,' says Dr. Gardiner, 'with the sense that they had but just escaped a massacre. The orderly D'Ewes testified his opinion of the danger by stepping to his lodgings and immediately making his will.'

That this opinion was shared by the country is shown by Lady Sussex's letter to Sir Ralph, written as soon as the news reached Gorhambury. 'Thes distracted times put us all in great disorder, but i hope wee shall not bee

kailledede; yet i think you are in greater danger then wee are in the contry; i pray god bles you with safety; your parlyment flyes hye; truly itt is a happy thinge, i thinke, the haue so much corige to stand to mentane ther right; the good tone of london it semes will do so to; truly the are to bee commendedede; surely the kainges party will bee to weke; that he must yelde to the parlyment; i pray god drect all your harts to do for the bes for the good of us all; if wee now be ouer cam wee are undon for euer; i hope thos gentillmen the kainge woulde haue from your hose shall bee safe; the stand so much for the generall good that it was a miserable thinge the shoulde cuffer; thes lettir will com safe, or else i shoulde not haue adfentiure to have sade so much. It was a blesede thinge thos gentilmen was from the parlyment when the kinge cam, he had ill counsill surly to com in such a way. I pray god all may conclude will, and that you may be as happy as you are wishede by your true frinde,' &c.

Sir Ralph's last note concerns the heir to the crown; June 27, the Commons are anxious about the appointment of the Prince of Wales' governor, and in a vain attempt to legis-^{1642.} late for the future declare they will tolerate 'noe marriage with any popish person.'

CHAPTER XV.

DAME MARGARET VERNEY.

1641.

April 9,
1641.

SIR EDMUND and Sir Ralph had been carrying on their Parliamentary duties under the crushing weight of a domestic sorrow; in the beginning of April 1641, Dame Margaret Verney died rather suddenly. She is mentioned as having been ailing for some time past, but no one seems to have apprehended any danger. Lady Sussex, who was in weekly communication with Sir Edmund and his son, writes to Ralph: 'The unexpectedde sade nuse gave me a harty soro, most for your lose of such a mother and for myselfe of soe deare a friend. This world is full of changes. God fit us for his plesure. As you are truly good, so in this show your religon by a discrete soro, that you falle not ill this sickly time. Belive non wishes more happinesse both to yourself and family.' She adds that she would have written also to his wife, but 'I am out of tune with physicke, belive me i truly cuffer.' She writes again: 'S^r I shoulde not say anythinge to renue your soro, but a better woman livede not then your good mother, who sartinly inioyes the fruite of her goodnes with the blesede sants, i am glade you have parlyment bisynes to take you off your sade thoughts. . . . I entendede a cote to my godsone this Easter, and now I know he is in mourninge therefore have sent him a porringer to ete his breakfast in.' The 'cote' that Lady Sussex had planned for little Mun was of a lovely sky-blue figured satin. The pattern she sent to Ralph still exists, pinned to the scrap of paper on which he wrote down her many commissions; the colour is as brilliant as ever, and

April 26,
1641.

seems a mute reminder, amongst the old brown letters, of the many bright things that were changed to mourning when the mother of the family died.

Margaret Verney was all her life what the French happily call *très entourée*; whenever we see her she is claimed by a chorus of little voices, and surrounded by a troop of little pattering feet. At Hillesden she was the eldest daughter in a family of eleven, at Claydon she was the mother of twelve, and she kept up her intimacy with her brothers and sisters, and the ever-increasing number of her nephews and nieces. Married at eighteen, she returned to her mother's roof for her many confinements; her elder children were the contemporaries of her own little brothers and sisters; and her granddaughter Anna Maria was a year old when her youngest child, Betty, was born.

Something has already been told of the large circle of friends constantly entertained at Claydon in the happy years before the Civil War, and of her motherly care of her eldest son's wife Mary, with whom she lived on terms of such intimate affection. It was a remarkable household of capable women, and besides her own six daughters, her daughter-in-law, and her grandchildren, Margaret had the older generation to consider, her mother and her mother-in-law. In 1640 there were four Lady Verneys: Sir Edmund's mother, wife, and daughter-in-law, and the widow of Sir Francis. Sir Edmund's mother shared his house in London, and expected to be consulted when plans were made or changed. James Dillon writes to Mary after a visit to Claydon, when the dowager's feelings had been unfortunately ruffled: 'Be ^{July 3,} pleased I pray you to lett my Ladie Verney [Margaret] ^{1633.} knowe, that I noe sooner came to towne then presently I gave your grandmother here an account of her messuage by me, which ffor ought I could say (or see) seemed not sufficient unto my ould Lady Verney to prevent exception on her parte against your mother if she were not mett by my Lady's coach from thence at Anersome.'

In 1638 'Lady Verney the Elder' desired her grandson Edmund to go over to Albury and see the condition of the

vault in which her husband, Sir Edmund Verney, had been laid in the first days of 1600. He writes to Ralph, that he could not go there himself, 'but according to her direction I acquainted old Roades with it, who sent a messenger thither on purpose with a note to the parson (one Gilpin, a Maudlen Hall man in my time, and I think in yours too), who came over to Claydon himself and brought the answer, that it was as handsome and in as good repaire as it was when my grandfather was buryed there, he proffered one complement, which I durst not acquaint my grandmother with, that upon a weeke's warning he would be provided of an excellent funerall sermon for her!'

There was ample time for the Reverend Mr. Gilpin to polish his complimentary periods, as the old lady, according to a note of Lord Fermanagh, lived to the age of 95, having survived her third husband for 43 years. Sir Ralph, writing in '47, mentions a legacy which her grandmother left to Moll: 'in that will my father was left sole executor, but hee died before grandmother (14 or 15 daies), soe I tooke out the administration and payd all legacies,' etc. This fixes the date of old Lady Verney's death as November 7 or 8, 1642; a fortnight after the battle of Edgehill.

Margaret also spent a part of the year with her mother, Dame Susan Denton, who survived her by a few months.¹ Both these vigorous old ladies lived to superintend the bringing up of their great-grandchildren. Lady Denton never spared her family, and prided herself on her frankness, 'I love to deale a bove ground'; but she pleaded for a gentler *régime* than was the fashion of the day, for the little ones of the fourth generation. Edmund, Ralph's boy, had been left entirely in her charge at Hillesden: 'eldar brother is wel, God bles him.' In October 1639 he was sent for to London, his father and grandfather complained that he was shy and rustic. 'i heare,' wrote Lady Denton, 'he is disliked, he is so strange. Sonn, you did see he was not soe, nor is not soe, to any where he is a quanted, and he must

April 26,
1638.

¹ Lady Denton's mother, Lady Temple, the most prolific of her race, lived to see 370 of her descendants.



DAME MARY VERNEY, NÉE BLAKENEY, THIRD WIFE OF THE FIRST
SIR EDMUND VERNEY

be woone with fair menes. Let me begge of you and his mothar that nobody whip him but Mr. Parrye; yf you doe goe a violent waye with him, you will be the furst that will rue it, for i verily beleve he will reseve ingery by it.' She goes on to remind these unreasonable men that she can remember when they, too, were shy and awkward children. 'Indede, Raphe, he is to younge to be strudgeled in any forsing waye. i had intelygence your fatlier was trobled to see him soe strange. i pray tel him frome me, I thought he had had more witt then to thinck a childe of his adge woulde be a quanted presently. He knowes the childe was feloe good a nofe in my house. i praye shewe him what I have written abought him, and be shure that he be not frited by no menes: he is of a gentel swet nature, sone corrected.' It gives one an idea of the awful severity of nursery rule in those days, that the great-grandmother should have to plead that *only* 'Mr. Parrye' should whip a child not yet three years old, whose face and ways when at his ease were so engaging, that his soldier uncle, Edmund, wrote of him, 'that sweete promising countenance of your pretty sonn is able to inspire even the ignorant with such a prophesying spirit; there's not that lineament either in his face or body, but prognosticates more for itself than we cann doe for it.' 'I have carryed his nurse the Rhubarb, and shee promiseth he shall constantly drinke it,' says another letter about this much-tried infant, 'I hope he shall have noe neede of a nisshue.'

The next year the child is with Lady Denton again, and she writes to Ralph: 'i pray tell your wife that hur boye in soe short a time is much in proved in his manners i gese by this he hath al redy that in time he wil prove a complet courtier. i cann get nothings from him but bl^m me Ladye & god morow Ladye & so he gooth one to all his antes, & he is as much reformed of his willfull waye in this short time as ever i see, & it is done with love & feare,' . . . 'for his diat pprese wil not fil his bely, harde chese had byne the fittest thinge with him.'

May 13,
1630.

May 26,
1639.

But in spite of the 'whippinges,' the vomitings, the

'sweating pills,' the purgings and the blood-lettings which appear in the family records with painful reiteration and detail, Dame Margaret's government of her nursery was eminently successful and judicious. Her children were devoted to her, and ten out of the twelve lived to grow up in health and vigour of body and mind, a most unusual proportion in those days.

In a family life so happy and so like our own, it is startling to find what good sensible women allowed their daughters to be married as mere children. 'Sweet seventeen' is often a matron inured to household cares, and either the mother of a family, or mourning the loss of two, and sometimes three babies. The deaths in childhood, the premature births, and the large proportion of children who died before they were ten years old, passionately loved and tenderly cared for, are most pathetic; the poetry of the day is full of epitaphs upon infants; two such are found in the Verney manuscripts, copied out more than once by loving hands.¹

Mary had her full share of these troubles. She was only sixteen when a little daughter was born to her at Claydon on July 21, 1632, baptized the same day by her mother's name, and buried the next.

'The cup of life just to her lips she press'd,
Found the taste bitter, and refused the rest,
Then gently turning from the light of day,
She softly sighed her little soul away.'

How tenderly baby Mary's memory was cherished appears in an allusion to her, in a letter of Ralph's to his wife,

¹ On an Infant.

Heere lies a blossom of the worlds greate tree
Wh^{ch} was as faire as Buds of Roses bee.
She died an Infant: Heaven was made for suchie.
Live thou as Infants doe shalt have as muchie.

On an Infant.

Tred softly passenger for heere doethe lie
A tender parsell of sweet Infancie,
A Harmeless Babe that only came and criede
Through Baptisme to be washte from sinn. So died.

fifteen years afterwards. We have a shadowy glimpse of another baby, who apparently came and went in the following year, for there is a letter of condolence from Ralph's old tutor Crowther from Langley Marsh. A year later he prays for 'glad newes of a lusty heyre.' The child proved to be a girl, and was welcomed with rapturous affection. She was named Anna Maria; James Dillon was her godfather, and she was christened in Middle Claydon church. There had been another happy family gathering at Claydon a fortnight before for the christening of George, son of Sir Alexander Denton and Mary Hampden his wife.

Aug. 25,
1634.

Sept. 16.
1634.

How much Sir Edmund and Dame Margaret loved their grandchildren is shown in the pathetic letter written at one o'clock in the morning by Sir Edmund, when little Anna Maria was taken ill in her father's absence. 'Raphc, your sweete child is going apace to a better wourld; shee has but a short time to staye with uss. I hope you have such a sence of God's blessings to you as you will not repine at his decrees; make all convenient haste to your good wife who wants your comfort, yet come not too faste for that maye heate your bludd; and that maye give an end to all our comforts; as ever I shall intreat anything from you take care of yourselfe, for this is a dangerous yeare for Heats and colds. The God of Heaven Bless you, your loving father. Ed. Verney.'

May 19,
1638.

Anna Maria was not quite four years old, but Ralph's letter in the following January to the usually unsympathetic Henry, then serving in the Netherlands, shows what a favourite she had been in the family: 'You shall herewithal receive a ringe filled with my deare gerle's haire; shee was fond of you, and you loved her therefore I now send you this to keepe for her sake.'

The empty cradle was filled again with 'a brave swite baby,' and before Margaret died she had the happiness of seeing Ralph and Mary with three healthy children: Edmund, Lady Sussex's godson, and old Lady Denton's *protégé*, born on Christmas Day, 1636; Margaret, born in January 1638; and John, born November 5, 1640.

Sept. 29,
1633.

Oct. 2,
1633.

We hear less of Dame Margaret's father, Sir Thomas Denton, than of her mother, but Ralph was much attached to him, and on his death wrote a passionate letter of regrets to Dillon: 'The greate God in whose hand is the soull of every livinge thinge hath by death taken my grandfather into an endlesse life.' James replies: 'Tis I confess noe small crosse to loose a grandfather & therefore must I (for y^r afflictions belevee it, as my owne I beare) condole with you, that y^{rs} ceases to be that living comfort wch he was unto you. But Sir . . . y^r grandfather was long a diseased man & unlikely to live . . . I trust his death found you the better armed to beare it. But to divert y^r thoughts, receive now Breerwood's Logicke, and with it the Figures and Tropes Rhetoricall,' etc.; whether they were a better medicine for a sad heart than Crowther's divinity we are not told.

There are incidental notices of her servants which seem to show that Margaret was a good mistress, and that she was well served. The maids whom she mentions in her will continued in faithful attendance upon her daughters, when the altered fortunes of the family, and the great reduction of the household, must have made their situations at Claydon far less desirable than they had been under their old mistress.

April 1,
1639.

Until her eldest son was able to help her, the affairs of the family were all managed by Lady Verney; her busy husband seems to have relied implicitly upon her judgment and practical sagacity, whether in making arrangements for Tom's voyage to Virginia, in the management of the estate at Claydon, or in respect to those powders 'excellent to prevent the gowte,' which she keeps for him, and sends after him to Scotland, when he is tormented by 'crewell twinges.'

April 27,
1636.

Sir Edmund writes to her from London: 'Good Puss, The plaage is likely to encrease. If cyther you or my daughter [Ralph's wife] can thinke of what you shall necessarily want, as gloves & such things, lett me know it in time & I will provide them. I would faine have the carrier bring up a cart about this daye fortnight, if it maye be no

prejudice to him . . . I will send down some more wyne, & what els you think fit; for if the sicknesse encrease this next tow weekes it is much to be feared that it will be a dangerous time here.' Sir Nat. Hobart writes during the summer from Highgate to thank Ralph 'for the frendly care you have taken to provide us a place of refuge during this contagion. . . . The K^t Marshall Sir Edmund Verney graced us lately with his company some two houres, not reckoning one spent in knocking at the gate, for the house was soe drownde in sylence that there wanted nothing but a red cross to make him believe the plague was there.' A bad outbreak occurred in the year of the King's accession, and again in 1630.

Margaret was arranging to send up some poor people to be touched by the King, and her husband writes again: 'Good Pass, for those people you wright about to have cure for the King's Evill, I will have all the care of them I can, but till good Fryday hee will heale none. I belceve he will heale that daye and in Easter Hollidayes.' About the cure itself there seems to be no doubt!

It is a proof of the kind of estimation in which Henrietta Maria's Court was held by the graver and more religious of the English ladies that there is no sign that either of the Lady Verneys, the Countess of Sussex, or Mrs. Eare, well-born, well-connected, and women of fortune and position, ever attended it.

It was the more remarkable in the case of Sir Edmund's wife, as he was himself in attendance on the King during so large a part of the year, that her absence from Court must have been somewhat marked. Margaret Verney was, however, a gentle retiring woman, much occupied with her home duties, and her ideas of life more resembled those of Mrs. Hutchinson and Rachel Lady Russell than of the ladies whom Henrietta Maria gathered about her in the years of her splendour.

The fatigues, anxieties, and conflicting duties of her later life, the necessity of leaving her young children at Claydon to their own guidance, or of giving up the comfort of the husband who required a home in London for a large

part of the year, and to whom she was so warmly attached, had evidently told upon her health. There were also perpetual money difficulties, the most wearing of all cares to the mistress of a family. Her ten children, each and all, were becoming more and more expensive; none of them, excepting Ralph, independent of home help, while Sir Edmund's resources diminished. In addition to these causes for disquietude there was the growing antagonism between the two parties in the State. Her son Ralph had taken the Parliament side, while her husband was in a painful position; attached to the King by all his prepossessions and inherited feelings of loyalty, but torn in sunder by political and religious sympathies, which drew him the other way. The fear of an estrangement between the two who loved each other so well, signs of which began to appear, must have been peculiarly distressing to so tender a wife and mother as Margaret. It was hardly surprising if a little more illness than usual, under such circumstances should prove fatal.

She kept up to the last, and seems to have been alarmingly ill only for a few days in Covent Garden. Her husband and son were both with her when she died, and accompanied her body down to Claydon, where she was buried in the chancel close to the house. The absorbing duties of Parliament admitted of no long absence; they were in the very midst of Strafford's trial, and as soon as the funeral was over, Sir Edmund and Sir Ralph returned to Westminster. Young Edmund did not hear till July of his mother's death, and then wrote to Lady Verney from York: 'My dearest Sister, I wondered not at all at your silence, because the conveyance of letters is soe uncertaine, but now I know why you did not write I am very sorry not for your silence, tho' nothing could be more wellcome to me than your letters, but for having so sadd a cause for it. Tis most true the lose of our Mother was infinite, but I'll not torture you by expressing it more largely.'

Ralph could not resist the temptation of making his grief curvet and prance in the most approved forms and fashions of the day. In writing to tell Lady Barrymore of

his mother's death, he actually copies the elaborate letter in which Dillon had announced to him Lady Digby's death eight years before, which he must have kept by him as a perfect model of its kind.¹ The fact is the more curious, because Sir Ralph's sorrow was so genuine, and he was so capable of turning elegant and well-balanced phrases of his own on any occasion.

Lady Barrymore replies from Castle Lyon: 'Noble July 1641. Enemy, I shall begge your belief that there is no one so unfortunate as to have so littel acquaintance with my lady that was more truly sorrowfull for her loss than myself. Butt schach grete blessinges are not given us from God with a fixe time when wee should parte with them or how long wee shall keepe them, because we should always pray to him for the continuance of the happiness; and my prayers shall be that we may all tread in those paths she did, that we may enjoy the felicity shee now doth and ever shall possess. As in the fruition of her unspeakable content I beseech you to comfort yourself.'

The expenses of mourning must have been very great, as it was the custom to send it to all intimate friends as well as to near relations. Lady Sussex thanks Ralph for the offer of it, but says that as she is seeing no one at Gorhambury, where her husband is seriously ill, she will not accept of any. Everything belonging to a widow or widower was to be black. On April 6, Ralph mentions the black bed and hangings 'that my father borrowed of my aunt Eure,' which she had caused Ralph to buy for her at the death of her own husband three years before, when her whole room was hung with black and the furniture covered with it. A list of thirteen 'pieces' is mentioned, 'blacke clothe hanginges three yardes deepe and foure and a halfe yardes longe,' two others 'three yardes deepe and three yardes longe.' The effect must have been most depressing upon those whom custom thus compelled, at the very moment when they wanted cheering, to inhabit a room where they could not for a moment forget their loss. An excuse is made in one of the letters for having

¹ See p. 133.

even a white coverlet thrown over the bed of a young Verney widow forty years after this time, because she is sick and cannot bear black cloth.

Aug. 8,
1641.

Sir Edmund orders Roades to 'gett the oulde saddles at home covered with blacke, against I use them, which I thinke will be about the beginning of the next weeke. You may do them at Buckingham either with cloath or baize, and if you have no blacke bridels, sende me worde and I will buy some here.' A 'blacke coche' for some time after a death was considered correct, and Sir Ralph sends to borrow one for his own use after the death of his son John's wife about thirty years later.

May 2,
1639.

Margaret Verney's will, made in 1639, and addressed to Ralph, is very touching. She had a good fortune, indeed a large one for the time, but this seems to have been merged in the Claydou estate, as she mentions 'All such of my goods w^{ch} y^r father hath given me leave to dispose of. . . . A hundred pounds in my Red Box give your father toe by what hee pleases toe keepe for me.' She seems to have kept a good deal of money in odd places; 22*l.* 17*s.* 11*d.* was found in small sums after her death: 'in a red velvet purse 5*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*; in an old glove 1*l.* 15*s.*; in y^e Black & White pocket 4*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.*; in y^e Spanish pocket 7*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.*; in a White Dish 1*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*.'; besides 144*l.* 13*s.* 5*d.* in the red box, enclosed 'in the Tufftaffaty purse,' or in 'the blewe paper,' etc. etc.

She is very particular about the disposal of her linen and the fine holland sheets of four breadths, &c., 'which were never yet washed.' 'Give your wiffe, my diamonde clapses, sheepe heade and the reste of my odd diamonds and my sable muffle and six of my new greate smockes.' Ralph's eldest son, then an infant, was to have the sheets and a diamond ring and 100*l.* 'put out until he is a neare toe bee married, then, bestow it in good plate as ffarr as it will in that wh^{ch} is moste yousefull for him. . . . Give Allcocke ¹ 40*l.*, the poore at Middle Cleadon five pounds, Mr. Aris ² 5*l.*; . . . Betty Coleman 10*l.* toe plase [place] her and pray take

¹ The housekeeper.

² The rector.



DAME MARGARET VERNEY

som care toe see her plased with it. . . . If cooke is with me give her sum 3*l*. and sum of my worser gowns, and give my man according as he is. . . . Give your father my guilte tankard and the case of silver-hafted knives, and dessier him to leave them to your elldist sonn. . . . Bestow sum 1*l*. apeece of toyes or blake ringes for my mother, my brothers and sisters and their husbands and wives. . . . There are 4 verry fine smokes (smocks) in your father's little linnen tronke and one of my four breadthe Hollande sheets for your owne Gerle Pegge . . . there is monie enough in the Red Box which with the firste halfe years intrust will pay your father and the 1 pound toys presently. . . . Pay the undermaids, and poore, and Mr. Aris next before the bigger sums. . . .'

The items are sadly mixed, but she returns touchingly to her husband again and again. 'Take your father's tablett Picktuer yourselve and give him Prince Henneris. They boathe lye in the Red Box, and I dessier your father that hee will nott lett anie of my Housolde Linnen bee soulded, but that it may goe toe you and your elldiste sonn and I hope to his sonn toe, only sum of my brodeste of my owne makinge give toe your sisters. . . . Now pray lett non of my papers bee scene; but doe you burne them yrselfe. All but my noats and account and medsinable and coockery Boockes, such keep. . . . Let me be buried in leade att Claydon next where y^r ffather proposes to ly himselve, and lett noe strandger winde me, nor doe nott lett me bee striptte, but put me a cleane smoke over me . . . and lett my faso be hid and doe you stay in the roome and see me wounde and layed in the firste coffin, which must be woode if I doe nott dye of anie infectious disease, ellse I am so far from dessieringe it that I forbid you to com neare me. So the God of Heaven bless you all.'

Probably the marks of the great burns made the poor woman unwilling that any 'strandger should winde' her, and made her ask her beloved Ralph to see that all such tender offices were reverently done, though with the pathetic proviso that he was not to come near her to his own hurt.

In this comprehensive will, Tom alone, strange son of such parents, was not mentioned; in later years he twisted the omission into a charge against her executor. He writes April 1648. to Mary 'concerning the smothering of my mother's will, noe caus can be shewed why it was soe, but to deprive mee of a small legacy. . . . I desired S^r Raphe to informe mee whether I had not as much given mee as my brothers had, I was told noe . . . and he further assured mee that my mother was extreemly incensed against mee to her dye'ng houre . . . it was a most unchristianlike saying, for how could shee make a happy end & beare malice to her death. It is noe part of my belief. But you & your husband w^d rather have the world question the salvation of our mother's soul then to pay mee that small legacye shee left mee. I could insist very large on this subject. I doe admire that you both are not dayly and hourely affrayed that your father's ashes doth not rise in your faces for your strainge behaviours towards mee, which hath soe extreemly suffered for our father's sake.'

Margaret Verney died aged 47; she was taken away from the evil to come, before the death of her husband in battle, the burning down of her old home at Hillesden and the death of her brother in the Tower; before the sequestration of Claydon and the long weary years of her dear Ralph's exile; before the murder in cold blood of her gallant son Edmund, and the downfall of that monarchy which her own and her husband's family had made so many sacrifices to uphold.

By Ralph's filial piety her memory is preserved in the church at Middle Claydon, where her grave gentle face, in white marble, has looked down upon so many successive generations, praying, rejoicing, sorrowing, in the place where she, too, loved to worship.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RISING IN MUNSTER.

1641-1642.

STRAFFORD had ruled Ireland for eight years sternly but successfully ; when the strong man was removed the seething discontent gathered force. There were rumours that the Catholic population was to be uprooted ; the rebellion broke out in Ulster and spread to the South. The tidings reached London in November 1641, and every post brought news of fresh cruelties practised by the rebels. Sir John Leeke writes to Sir Edmund at the end of the year, in the greatest distress.

‘The frights and terrors wee heere live in, cannot welbe expressed but by such as suffer and feele the distraction, whereof many are com for England that cann relate itt as eie witnesses, which you will hear of befor this letter cann come to yo^r hands, as the noble Inceyquin and Mr. Jepson. I before sent letters by Mistress Jepson, whos passadg we much sorrow for, the next day being extream tempestuous. With her went the Lady St. Leger, and the good Lady of Inceyquin and many children. God of his mercy bless them all and land them all safe. You may perceive by thes greate personages going away, our danger. Lady Kilmalmechy hath enough I believe of Ireland, she is a most noble and sweetly disposed lady. I beseech you assone as she comes to Court, see her and give thanks for her kindness.’ He asks Sir Edmund ‘by gaining the king or some great man’s letters to procure for me a Company of foote, I shall prepayle to have them garrisoned at Youghal when we leave the field.’

Lady Barrymore cannot pay the money sent through her, 'and we perish meantime for want.' 'Lady ffenton and many of my good friends take houses at Tanton and entend to recyde there or at Minhead.' 'I protest I am most miserable, for though I have friends, yet noe friend to lend me tenn pounds. No man will part with a peny of money, and by all that is good in heaven and earth, I nor my wife have in purse 40s.—We have 20 good cowes, wee may have none tomorrow, such is the case of many men. I have barreled beefe and porke and some littell wheat and mault for a moneth, God healp us and send the English forces to us, or hearts would be light and our corrages stronge, for thes English wee have here have gott good things abowght them, and themselves and ther goods gott into stronge townes. The country is abandoned and in my Lords country is nothing left but ther cattell and a servant or tow in ther house. I howld yett in the parke, but on Munday or Tews-day I must to Yoghall, my wife is in that extremitie of feares (as cause she hath poore sowle) that I must not delay longer but leav the Lodg, nether will I mayntayn the Lodg with my life and what I have, and my lord allow me nothings to itt. . . . P.S.—Barrymore taks the field tomorrow with 60 dragowns and 70 lancers. Browghall goeth to the rendezvous as stronge if not stronger.' He asks that a case of pistols may be sent him 'for I will not stay in Yoghall, but will into the field with Barrymore, and see something that may inable my knowledge. I lack a sword wth a garded hilte, I want other armes, but have noe way to have them—bee we as patient as we can.'

Nov. 13,
1641.

Ralph, in alarm for the safety of his friend Lady Barrymore, writes to her: 'Your stay [in Ireland] afflicts mee extreemly least you should bee suddainly surprised by those Barbarous Rebels who (if Fame belye them not) delight in cruelty, and take pleasure in insolency, above and beyond y^e worst of infidells. truly maddame though I have never been much in love with Papists, yet I beleeved them to bee christians, but if they offer violence to you, or yours, I shall change my opinion. . . . now you see it utterly impossible

to infuse any humanity into those pagan Irish, bee pleased to come over and make us happy heere.'

Sir John writes again: 'I have not longe since writt to you by Mr. Booth and before that by Mrs. Jepson, they all Jan. 10
and 12,
1642. tende to one tune—a relation of our distractions and miseries. Clomell, the key of Munster is taken one Saterdag last; Dungarvan and the castell is taken both by the trecherie of the townsmen; Kilkenny tenn dayes since was taken by the Lord Mont Garratt and his four sonnns and sonn-in-lawes. My Lady of Ormund and hir children are in the castell, and ther imprisoned, Mountgarratt is in the castell with a face to secure the Lady, but a false harte. I am now come to Yoghall with my company, wher wee are as secure as in any Irish towne; God knowes there is noe security but wher a good English garrison doth secure. The vertuos Lady Kilnalmechy hath commanded this letter, which she will deliver to you with hir own hande; shee cann give our miseries to the life. My Lord of Broghall went before the towne of Dungarvan, the next day itt was surprised, with 60 horse and 50 foote and tooke the praye of the towne, which consisted of 120 cowes and horse, and neere 400 sheepe, and carried them to Lismore, which was 8 myles. The present Munday, the 10th, my Lord Dungarvan intended to have mett his brother att Dungarvan with 80 brave armed horse and 100 foote, but when 25 of his horse were ferried over, an express came to my Lord Dungarvan from my Lord President to command him into the feild to joyne with him and Barrymore, which army will be neere 400 brave horse, besides 1,200 foote, and some peeces of ordinance; Barrymore hath 60 Dragoons which have done good service and execution; this army carryeth a brave resolution though but smale in number, yett corragious and discreetly commanded; thes fight for honor and ther lands, all is att stake; ther is not a country wee cann here of but the cuntry of Corke but are in action; Oh! wee sigh and greeve for the English forces, wee beleewe they will come, but the kingdome wil be so neere loosinge, or att least destroyinge, that the regayninge will cost more blood and

charge then the first conquest did or all the warre in Queene Elizabeth's time. Wee here this night that Dunganarvan is fortified with 2 or 3,000 men, and as is noysed, under command of my Lord of Ormund's only brother; the Rebels are so stronge between Dublin and us that the Earle of Ormund cannot come from Dublin wher he is, eyther to succour his wife, his cuntry, or chastise his braine-sick brother; his cuntry is more infested then any of our parts, 3 Lords of the Butlers are in action. God of his mercy send us succors and fight for us and with us to the distruction of thes ungratious rebels that fullness of bread and to to gracious favors of our Royall Kinge have given them (since Queene Eliz roodd was taken from them) and have bine blessed with the sweet of peace and w^hout disturbance inioyd ther conciences But beasts that have bine used to the yooke, growe more crooked and perverse when they are putt to fatt pasture. I do believe that whosoever shall live to this day twelvemonth shall see such a dearth and famine as hath seldom or hardly bine known in Ireland; what cattell the rebels cannot come at, we are inforced to barrell up, for if the rebels take our cattell (which they have done in infinite number, both of fair sheepe and goodly cattell as most in England), what they eate they kill with their skeens and let them lie and stink. The first work they did was to rob all the English of their cattell, to starve them which cannot subsist of roots and oats as they do. To conclude, our state is lamentable, if we but look to what was, to what now is, and to what of certain must be. For my particular I know not what to do in the turmoyles; cattell I have in the park, but how long I am not certain, yet we are in a safe place as long as Yoghall continues good, which God grant. Monys are not to be hadd for any thyng unlessse armes, swords, and muskets, which are gowld & silver, a frende to a frende . . . plate, household stuff are not merchantable. . . . There are not any women of quality but are come for England, nor any that have wealth. . . . The ould Earle of Cork is full of distractions, not like the man he was; his sons are most noble, and you should hear brave things

of their undertakings and performances. . . . I should be loath to leave Ireland until the fier burns my heels. I beseech you send me a case of pistols and a close hilt sword. I have a desire (tho' I am old) not to be an Idler; a word from a friende or yourself might gain me a company to be garrisoned in Yoghall. I believe it not very difficult, considering my Lord of Leicester is my noble friend, and this virtuous Lady Kilnelmechy my anchor to trust to, for so hath she offered and promised. . . . this Wednesday morning the 12 wee have the ill newes the Rebells are within 4 myles of Lismore, my lord Dunganvan sent out xxiiii horse under the command of his cornett Honest Jack Travers who was by an ambush betrayd and himselfe slaine and 2 footmen. 500 were of the Rebells well appoynted.'

It is not surprising that the English soldiers on their arrival in Ireland were filled with rage at the sights they saw and the relations they heard. Sir John writes again: 'Sir Charles Vavesor, a noble gentillman who doth assure me he left you well, and took his leave of you the day before he sett one his jorney for Irelande hath brought over 1,000 as brave carcasses of men as ever I beheld wth my eies and would fayne be in the feild and fightinge. they had well hooped that they should have fallen to pillaging the Irish of the towne of Yoghall, and meetinge wth some Irish wemen that hadd mantells and crucefixes abowght ther neckes, wth the soldiers teore from them, but by ther commander were quieted, the preests are all stole out of the towne and noe masse sayd yesterday, beinge Sunday. . . . wee expect this day or tomorrow to see my Lord of Inceyquinc, if the wind hould fayre as itt is. The very noyse of the landinge the troops have blowne away rebells, that laye neere Yoghall, but abowght Lismore, where Browhall hath killed and hanged many, some loss he hath receved as a brave gentillmann his Cornell. The Rebells did use much cruelty before ther departure by dragginge a gentillman out of his howse, and bindinge his hands, layinge him on a banke, and shott him to death; 4 poore English that wer

March 4,
1612.

ther, they hanged, drawinge them up to a hovell post, and held them until they were dead, and this was done within Lismore precincts; the rebells were 71 colours in one place and 8 or 9 in another, but they vanished in a moment to the mountaynes. Ther Gennerall the Lord Mount-Garratt is fallen from the Lord Roch and gone into his one contry, with 6,000 men. . . . They marched to Mallo, wher were tow castels, Mr. Jepson's house is very stronge and well appoynted, the other not bigger than an ordinnary steeple, but 25 good men at Least and a stowt commander; the Rebells summoned the castell but they were answered wth muskett Bullets, in short they killed neere 200 Rebells, and hurt many, att last powder faylinge, they accepted quarter and went to Mr. Jepsons castell; the English lost very few. The next day the Rebells parted ther army. Killnalmechy keeps his towne of Bandon Bridge . . . this last week he fell most bravely on the enemy: 400 of the Rebells came neer Bandon with some p^rvision and necessaries of usqubach, wine, bread, some munition and ther apparrell, 3 cartloads. Killnalmechy drew out 200 musketteeres and himselfe and 70 horse, putt them to rout, and running killed 104, tooke prisoners and hanged them, many prime gentillmen were slayne. . . . Our lands are all wasted, and we shall have no profit this many yeares.' He entreats Sir Edmund to get him a company or to lend him some money. 'I have gott four soldiers to keepe the house. . . . Here no man hath anythinge, nor shall not this many yeares; the stocke of English sheep and cattel are almost destroyed, the Rebells stole English sheepe from a frende of mine, but some dayes after the English troops tooke some of the sheepe and other cows from the Rebells; the troopers sell the sheepe for 12*d.* 8*d.*, and 6*d.* when ther skinn^e were well worth 16*d.* and so sould thus all turnes as mischeefe to the poore English; littell or noe restitution unless the proprietor be in pursuit and recover, God heulp us. . . . Tom Badnedg [his son in law] is . . . now Capt. of the gard of our Yoghall, it is credit but not a pownde profittable. his dilligence and care is a great security to the towne. Wee



MARGARET, DAME VERNEY. BURLINGTON.

DAME MARGARET VERNEY

I wish I had some pretty farm that might keepe my 20 cowes in any cuntry about you.'

Mar. 8,
1642.

Magdalen Faulkner writes from 'Castel Lyones,' to Sir Ralph: 'I receved your leter and in that the sadest nues that ever I louck to hear [Lady Verney's death]. . . . Wee are here in a most pettyful and lameinuntabel case as ever pore pepul ware in. God help ous, we have and here of nothing but fier and the sword and pettyful sites of pouer pepel strept nacked as ever they ware borne and we can expect nothing but famen for thay destroye all—they which at mickelmust last wore worth thre or fore thousen poundes nowe beges at ouer dore. My Lord behaves himselfe gallantly in this besnes for we have fefty famely in ouer houses for safty, and fouer times as many in ouer other castel, and none of my lords one cuntre is yet in rebelone, but we fere them ever daye and louck to be beseged and our towne fiered, for the enemy tuckes our cows and catel to ouer very dore God helph ous we knoe not what to do.'

Lady Barrymore writes:

March 16,
1642.

'I live every hour at the mercy of our increasing enemies and dare not as yet stir because the safety of so many depends upon my stay here, and we have daily the objects of the Papist's cruelty, which doth some what terrify mee.' She will not give particulars of their suffering, 'for I desier you may onley heare of it by the bye and never have a full relation of the many misereyes this poore kingdome is redust to, and much like to be worse, without you grave parlament men doe speedily send us more aide, which I begge you to doe that you may presarve in Ierland your unconstant enemy but faithfull freind to sarve you.'

March 17,
1642.

In her next letter Magdalen Faulkner says: 'We are fled from our one house, for the enemy came with soe greate a number aganst ous, that my Lord durst not let my lady and the cheldren stay. I thinke the next remove will be into England, for the enemy persues ous ever wher and voues oure delth, becace we wil not goe to mase which god almite kepe ous from.'

June 9,
1642.

Sir Ralph replies to Lady Barrymore: 'You are so

hardened by this winter's sufferings, that neither fire nor sword can fright you into England; 'tis truth there's little left that may invite you hither, the unhappy distractions of this kingdom have not only reduced ourselves into a sad condition, but made Ireland far more miserable.' The case of the poor English there was indeed deplorable; with civil war imminent in England, little assistance could be looked for. The King's proposal of going himself to Ireland to quell the rebellion was absolutely opposed by the Puritan party, who feared his gaining strength for further oppression at home.

Magdalen Faulkner writes again: 'onley this last weeke June 14,
1642. Caredealahand castel is taken and the Lord Roches castel and cuntrie burnt within to miles of ous. it was taken by my lord and the to regementes we have here, the lord president is past al hopes of life and he is general of munster but he wose not in the feld this quater of a yere. my lord is very good and doth take great panes and care for the helph of the englesh.'

A few months later Lord Barrymore was killed. According to one account, 'All the English that were robbed and stripped in Roche's and Condon's countries, many of whom his lady clothed, were carried by him safe to Youghall, with his troop of horse, which together with two companies of foot he maintained at his own charge. He headed them at the battle of Liscarrol and died of his wounds there on Michaelmas day, aged only thirty-eight. The Irish threatened to destroy his house, but he sent them word that he would defend it while one stone remained upon another.' 'He left a distressed lady,' says another writer, 'and four children, with an encumbered and disjointed estate, and all his country wasted.' His eldest son was only nineteen. Magdalen was now married to Mr. Bruce, but apparently stayed on with Lady Barrymore. She writes to Ralph: Nov. 1642. 'doue the best you can for the young lord, for he hath nothing left him; I hope you wil al conseder of it, for his father hath dun very good sarves as any man hath dun in this kingdum, but that mesenger wose unfortunately tacken by the pyrets; the rebels com every daye to our towne;

they towke a praye from my lady fore nites ago, 24 fat oxen, three score and ten melch cowes, besides our working oxen, thaye vowe to fier our towne and house and we have letel restance for them. God help ous out of this mesry for we are in gret disstres, for in the lose of my lord we lost the prop and stay of our contrey.' A month later : ' I fere we shale be forst to leve this kingdom very suddenly for want of meet, men and menishone, for al that is out of the enemyes hand wil not sarve the English threc month God helph ous ; the paralement hath made a fresh presedent and he is our general of this provence ; he hath soe many of his frindes and kindred in rebellyone and soe many of his frindes and kindred whiche gives proteckone and are protected by him that thay and dooe [undo] al ous pore pepel ; . . . sence my lord died thaye lere nobody for when he lived he kept al his one contrey in order, thaye durst not aman stur and thaye be as bad as the worst : thay are protected by the president within a mile of ouer castel ; god almite loucke one ous for these are miserable times ; . . . my lady is strept out of al that she hath.'

After this date there is little more correspondence between the Verneys and their unfortunate Irish friends. Sir John Leeke, ruined and hopeless, took refuge in England, and was followed by Lady Barrymore and her family.

The want of cohesion among the Irish made the rebellion hopeless from the outset. Dr. Gardiner thus sums up the memories left by this bitter struggle :

' If, in the darkness, Englishman could not discern the face of Englishman, how could it be hoped that he would discern the face of the Irish Celt ? His rebellion and cruelty had left no room, if there had been room before, for any remembrance of the wrongs he had suffered.'

CHAPTER XVII.

CARY VERNEY'S MARRIAGE.

1641-1645.

IN the midst of the anxieties and troubles of the year 1642, and the jarring conflict of opinion on all points, political and religious, young men and maidens were still marrying and giving in marriage.

Sir Edmund had promised his fourth daughter, Cary,¹ aged fifteen, his 'shee darling' as Dr. Denton calls her, to a young captain of dragoons in the King's service, eldest son of Sir Thomas Gardiner, Recorder of London, who afterwards succeeded St. John as Solicitor-General. He had an estate at Cuddesdon, near Oxford, some five-and-twenty miles from Claydon. The two had made acquaintance at the end of 1641; young Edmund was staying with his sisters at Claydon at the time, and writes to Ralph when Cary has had twenty ague fits in a day and is 'extreame ill.' 'Believe me, brother, shee is of ass sweet a disposition ass any creature I know living, and her affection to you is such that I thinke it expresseth what affection is or can be. In the extremitie of her fitte she will wish to me privately besides your lady for three men, my father and you are two, I thinke you may soone guesse the third, yet truely she nam'd him not.'

In the Long Parliament, Sir Thomas Gardiner, the King's

¹ Cary does not seem to have been an abbreviation of Caroline, for in Sir Edmund Verney's will, where Sue and Pen and Betty are given their Christian names in full, Cary's name is unaltered, and she transmitted it to a Denton godchild; she was probably called after Sir Edmund's friend, Mrs. Cary, afterwards Mrs. Herbert.

Dec. 1641. candidate for the Speakership, a hot-headed, violent man, was complained of to the House with the Lord Mayor, for 'putting obstructions in the way of persons signing a petition' for the removal of bishops and Catholic lords from Parliament. 'I hate a papist,' he declared, 'and I hate a petition worse.' He was impeached for opposing the proceedings in Parliament and committed to the Tower.

Lady Sussex writes: 'Your father I finde is full of sade thoughts. I am very sorry for Mr. Gardiner, for I fear swete Cary will cuffer for it.' And again, a few weeks later: 'Swete Cary, i hear, is now a marrede wife; i pray god it may bee happy every way to her. Your father i presume wase far ingagede or otherways i belive he woulde not have don it att this time.' The marriage had gone forward in spite of the very untoward circumstances connected with the bridegroom's father: Sir Edmund was not one to turn away from a man because he was in disgrace either with King or Parliament.

There is a pathetic list in his own hand, written amidst all the perplexing business during this, the last year of his life, of some of the linen and lace left by his wife, which he wished to give to his child on her marriage, and which he evidently felt were almost too sacred to be committed even to Ralph's loving charge; the 'fine-lased day coyle,' and 'fine-lased day cornet,' 'the seven handkerchers lased for pockets,' 'the twelve paires of plaine bottome cuffs,' and the 'on sette lased Lawn roled up in paper,' &c. Cary was married June 1642. from her father's house in Covent Garden, and some four or five weeks after, the pair went on their honeymoon trip to the bridegroom's sister Palmer, living at Hill in Bedfordshire. They were of course on horseback and slept at the halfway house at Welwyn, about twenty miles from London, whence Captain Gardiner writes to his sister-in-law, Lady Verney, whom he had just left with the rest of the family: 'After an indifferent pleasant journey, we came to our Inn at Wellen, neither came there any sorrow uppon us untill some object or other gave us an occasion to thinke on Common Garden, and truly we might well be greeved to

leave such company and converse onely with hedges and ditches and durty wayes.' But he hopes for 'better entertainment to morrow at Hill,' and sends messages to all his friends, 'which done you shall understand likewise that I am neither Puritan nor Roundhead, but am faithfully and sincerely and with all my heart, Deare madam, your truly affectionate brother.'

In another month or so, the young captain and his child-wife reached Sir Thomas Gardiner's house at Cuddesdon, and Cary writes to Ralph with great pleasure of her reception by her husband's family. 'I must let you know how wel I lik this place. I am confident you do wiss mee so wel ass to be glad of my contentment. Except the lose of all your good companie i have more than i did look for. Whin I came my granmother bid me very wellcom and made what enteranement shee cod, more a gret dele then I expected, and Sir tomas and my laydy bid mee very wellcom to Coddisdon and sado they wisht it might bee my one and truly uestis mee very civilly. . . . All my sistars with a grit dele of compliments did bid mee very wellcom and truly for the contarry pleshar wee have it, for we ar abroad every day tordis evening in the coche. . . . I hope i shall give no cos to bar myself of so grit a plesshur as contentment. Deare brother lit mee now have bot contentment more that is as to let mee heare how my father and yourselfe dus. Pray when that you wright to my father present my ombel duty to him, and let him kno I am will.'

Sir Edmund was with the King at York. Ralph replies from Gorhambury: 'your letter brought mee the welcomest newes I have had a greate while, for as I must bee a sharer in all your sufferings, soe you must give mee leave to joy in all your contentments. Those good people with whom you are now settled will still continew there love and kinnesse unlesse you faile in your due respects to them, which I am confident you will never doe. . . . I longe to meete you, . . . if the times prove quiet I purpose to visite Cudsden this suumer; however it will bee a greate contentment to mee to heare from you often.'

It did not appear that his desire would be granted. The Civil War began in earnest, and the decided part taken by Ralph in favour of the Parliament was very ill-looked on by the Gardiners. Dame Mary Verney received a taunting letter in Cary's name, but the English, handwriting, and spelling utterly unlike poor Cary's confused ill-written scrawls. It was apparently from one of the Gardiners, and is not the only instance of a 'sham letter' written as a practical joke. Cary had offended the fiery old royalist by wishing well to both sides 'for her owne endes,' certainly no unpardonable offence in the young bride of fifteen, with her father and husband fighting for the King, and her much-loved brother siding with the Parliament. The letter, dated from Cuddesdon, was addressed 'For my Deare sister The Lady Verney, in the Peatch in Coven Garden.' It begins with contradicting some news which 'on my worde is a lye' . . . 'I heare newes here w^{ch} I hope is as false. w^{ch} is that your husband is become a Traytor, but I cannot beleive that he will live and dye with the Earle of Essex to beare armes against his father, but I hope that is but his mind when he is amongst the crowd, but when he comes to take counsell with his Pillow he is more wisely minded. But indeed the world now accounts it pollicy for the father to be on one side and the son on th' other, but I will resolve to wish well to both sides or at least to say nothing of either, but it shalbe for my owne ends that I may be welcome to some of my freindes at London this winter, where I would willingly be if quietnese soo soone follow this troublesome summer, so wth my best love I rest y^r most affeate sister and servant.'

Sept. 5,
1642.

Lady Verney answers it with some sarcasm, and with proud confidence in her husband's disinterested integrity: 'This day I receaved a letter with your name to itt to make me beleevv it came from you, butt truly I cannot, because itt has neyther your hand nor stile. If I knew whose itt was I would tell you whatt I think of itt. Butt if itt be yours I must desire you to keepe to your old opinion and believe your brother is honeste then those thatt told you he was a traytor; for a crowde he ever hated itt and I know he is soo

Sept. 23,
1642.

good y^t he will nott suffer his conscience to be guyded by pollecy or any hope of possible gain [scratched out]. You may if you pleas beleerve this truth butt however lett me intreat you nott to conceale your opinion for those pryvate ends you speke of in your lett^r, for if I were you I would nott purchase my wellcome to any place at so dere a rate; and now sweet sister, since you cannot right yourself, I guess it will be troublesom to you to read long epistles, therefore Ile conclude myself yours to sarve you, M. V.'

Cary's husband had evidently no hand in the false letter; the handwriting is not his, and he had written to Lady Verney the same day from Cuddesdon in a very different tone. Sept. 5
1642.

'Give me leave to tell you that were not your Parliamentary officers so buisy in stopping and opening Letters, I would presume to write oftener to you. But I hate to have my secrets laid open to everybodie's view, not that I am conscious to my selfe of any ill in them, for in that respect I would not care to have them published to all the world, but me thinkes t'is neither fitt nor just that those thinges which in their owne natures were meant for a private conference betwixte one freind and another, should be read openly in Westminster Hall, and those things which were intended for the closett, to be proclaimed at the Crosse.' He thanks her for her letter, 'wherein every line was pleasant to me save onely one, and that was, you say you never had more cause to be sadd than now; Thinke you (Madam) that God hath outlawed you and putt you out of his protection. I am confident your goodnesse will not lett you thinke soe, or doe you suppose there is an Army of wilde Beastes, such as Lyons or Tygers are come to invade the land, for if you are to deale with men endued with rationall soules, your vertues will be a sufficient sanctuary from any violence. Besides I beleerve that neither King nor Parliament have any quarrell against women, who never did either hurt save only with their tounoges; and, which is most of all, if in earnest we have any warrs in the Kingdome (which I hope God will prevent) yet I dare proclaime you safe and immoveable in despite of fortune. . . . You have a father to defend you on the one

side, and a husband that will doe the like on the other. These things considered, your saddnesse is to be envied, not to be pittied, and you should rather blesse God that hath so well provided for your safety in these troublesome times, than be sadd and drooping. For my owne part, come what will, I shall make sorrow a stranger to me as often as I call to mind that I hold some part in your account and love. This honour is an Antidote unto me against any affliction, . . . and I shall never esteem myself miserable so long as you conceive a good opinion of me,' &c.

A week later Cary writes to Ralph himself, this time unmistakably in her own person: 'Deare brother I only writ these fu lines tu you as an expresion of the love and affection as i ow you, or els i shud a bin sillent for i am in a gr^t dill of vexsation for pore Oxford, for this day ther is 12 hondored solgars com ther, and I am afraid that thay will macke a grit masacar of all the books. They du threaten them extremely. What cannot be billeted in the toune at Oxford is sent tu all the tonnes about. Wee look for thim sodenly in hopp thay willbee betar thin ther promyses, for if thay ar not, the gentell men of the contrary will have litell left. Truly i spack this with a soro for we are lick tu tast it if threts prove tru, i am in a myty fright; . . . my comfort is that i think i have a louing brothar of you . . . I have sente you a somethings of min which i desiar hous rome for; i thot it wos the safest; i hop they willbee no trobell tu you; i thot it best to direckt tu you, becos it might not be opened. My lady and Sir tomos remenbars ther sarvices to you, and Mrs. Gardinar'—Mary, afterwards maid-of-honour to the Queen.

Ralph wrote to his brother-in-law in a kindly manner about 'the trunke' full of valuables. Each side accused the other of carrying off goods, 'plondawing' and confiscating, both probably with reason. Captain Gardiner expresses his thanks for Ralph's care of their trunk. 'The truth is we could trust it here no longer, for other counties are ignorant of the miseries of ours. One extravagant word, spoken but by one man, is enough to confiscate the goods of a whole family to the Parliament souldiers; what

their cause is I judge not, but methinks t'is a strange kind of justice to doe that by force which cannott be done by reason, and I am persuaded that Conscience hath much to doe on both sides, which though it may chance to be Erroneous yett ought to be respected. But these considerations enter not into vulgar hearts. The Gentry (say they) have been our Masters a long time and now we may chance to master them, and now they know their strength it shall goe hard but they will use it. I will make no Invectives, it shall suffice me to rest secure under your favour and countenance, and as your care of me hath been in some respect fatherly, so my relation must be dutifull.'

Ralph with his forgiving nature answers amicably from London: 'Swete brother I thanke you for your letter . . . Oct. 18, 1642.
for your trunk we cannot give it protection, but if you will venture it heare, it shall run the same fortune that my owne must doe. How full of hasard that may bee, I leave to your better judgment, for they say the King is cominge hither with all his forces, I beleave he is on the march already. You say it is strang justice that the parliament souldiers should doe that by force which cannot be done by reason. Tis true tis very unfitt for them to make themselves judges of what is reasonable, but on the other side you know when reason will not prevail, force must be used; the Law were nothing without a coersive power, but enough of this. I shall not need to tell you of the sad occasion that keeps me thus long silent [the small-pox at Claydon amongst his children and sisters]. I am sure you know it already, and are so sensible of it that in compassion you will pardon your most affectionate brother.'

Cary writes from Hill in Bedfordshire: 'I heare the Oct. 17, 1642.
Kinge is comin up tu London and i am very glad att itt for i shall hop tu see my father ther, for i hope tu bee in London some part of this winter, though wher tu bee i cannot it till. My brother and sister Pollmar [Palmer] presents their sarvis to you and the rest of the company.'

Poor Cary, with her fond hopes of meeting her father,

little thought what sorrow was in store for her, and how within a week he was to lose his life at Edgehill. We know not when and where the news reached her, but years after, writing on the 23rd of October, she dates her letter 'on this day fatal to our family.'

Dec 13,
1642.

Wild reports spread with the war, and Cary writes in a panic with feminine logic to Ralph: 'The parlement has frittened ous from Hill, and sine has frittened our carreg that wos comin to ous back agane, and ther it is in danger of plondarin, fore wee hear that it was pot to a vot in the house of comons wher thar my brother Pullmar's house shud be plondared or no. If it twos so dear brother, du your bist to barswad thim from it, for i am shur i shall have the gretist los for my brother has the fortun to send som of his away; i shall not bee excused for six hondared pound if they shud plondar. We heare tis Sir Rogar Borgin [Burgoyne] that moved it. If it was, i hop that you can posswad him from it, your solgers lye at Alsbery. My brother's man was taken there and 2 and fifty pound taken from him and hee imprisoned. Pray if you can stay Sir Rogar Borgin's fury.'

It is strange to come upon a letter full of flowery compliments, entirely ignoring the distracted state of the times; it throws a sidelight on the young wife's popularity with her friends, and that she knew how to preserve her dignity. Mr. Walter Rolt addresses an epistle 'To the faire hands of the most vertuous Lady Mrs. Cary Gardiner these humbly present,' and ties it up with red silk. 'Lady, had I not the honour to be acquainted wth yo' incomparable vertues, I should not adventure to offer my indigested letters to such an exact view as yo^{rs} whose witt and iudgment so infinitely transcend the low phrase in w^{ch} my penn discourseth. It is the noblences of yo' disposition Lady invites mee to this p'sumption and assures mee you will grant as many pardons as I comit errors, w^{ch} indeede are infinite. M^{rs} Bennet hath beene ill since your departure, but much comforted by the frequent visitts of my neighbour Mr. flishe who (wth great courtship) will helpe to furnish her for her ioyrny to

London, and I hope to have the honr to waite on her. At this instant (being occasioned by buisines) he is come into my house and desires his service may be p^rsented to you all, but especially to his Princesse (Alack a weladay Phillida flouts mee): Lady you see to what a boldnes yo^r favours have encouraged mee. It is a liberty that hath heretofore found acceptance from those that hath honourd me wth their familiarity, w^{ch} if you please to vouchsafe, I hope to garde myselfe wth such circumspection that you shall not repent of yo^r favours done to yo^r most obliged and humble servant.' 'I humbly begg the favour to have my service p^rsented to Sr. Thomas Gardner and his unknowne Lady, yo^r noble husband, the Princesse, and my much honrd neighbour Sr. William Palmer. I write no newes, Lady, I will not trust these tell-tale papers.'

Cary, writing to Ralph's wife about linen which she had been buying for her use, says: 'i never grougd my husband of any hapyness in my life more thin i did his seein of you and my missin of so mouch ioy. i cannot say anything of him for i have not sene him almost this fore months. hee is 2 hondard mils distance from mee. think what a trobill it is to mee which has so good a husband. i du pray for a hapy meeting of us all.'

The chances of war were continually throwing power into the hands of either side to help the other. In 1643 Cary's husband was taken prisoner in an affair near Windsor. Sir Ralph was immediately appealed to, and wrote to Sir Philip Stapleton at the head of the party, with whom he had been serving a few months before on a committee of the House: 'Till last nighte I had no certainty of June 21,
1648. Cⁿ Gardiner's being taken prisoner, neither can I yett bee satisfied whether hee is hurt, or what necessities may fall upon him in this restraint. S^r, the truth is hee married my sister, and I have sent this servant purposely to be satisfied in what condition he now is. If you please to doe me this favour to obtaine him leave to speake with him and to afford my brother such respect as may be fit for a gentleman in his distresse, you will infinitely oblige your . . .,' &c.

June 22,
1643.

Captain Gardiner himself wrote the next day 'to his most honored sister the Lady Verney these present. Madam, I am now released out of Windsor Castle, yett I shall never forgett the kindnesse w^{ch} your L^{ty} hath shewd me, and it was part of the happinesse that I fancied to myselfe when I was taken prisoner that I would have scene you before I got out, but I am commanded away by my lord Generall. Otherwise I should have gotten leave to have the freedom of one day and so have waited on you at London.' He adds a note to Ralph, who had obtained his release from his parliamentary allies: 'I am now att my liberty, and have approved by the surest signs how much you have been my friend. I hope God that has preserved me hithertoe will yett give me life that I may face to face expresse to you that I am your &c.' Cary had a baby born at Claydon, 1644, christened Thomas, who did not live long.

July 29,
1645.

A bright career seemed before the young soldier, who had been recently knighted, when he was sent out with a detachment of the King's army from Oxford, took part in a skirmish at Ethrop, a village four or five miles from Aylesbury, and was killed on the spot. Mrs. Isham writes of Cary: 'never was a woman lefte porer and lost a heter Hus!' Dr. Denton, sending the first news to Ralph in France, says: 'Y^r Brother Gardiner hath left a sad disconsolate widdowe great wth child: she hath lost a very kind Husse, who, though he showed it in severall thinges, yett he did it more especially in the differences betweene her and her Noverca [mother-in-law]. all w^{ch} he had soe handsomly reconciled that there was growinge great mutuall love and respect betweene all parties. I pray lett us know who hath her jointure and howe we may come by it . . . : he had an Intention to have setled as much uppon her as he could (soe well did he love her) but God hath p'vented it.' A few weeks later he writes: 'When her husband died he left her not a penny in the house, her father and mother when I left her (w^{ch} was above 3 weeks since) had not and I am confident will not contribute a penny towards her releife. I had left her penniless had I

not supplied her wth a small pittance of £5 which I feare is spent. . . To adde yett more to her affliction, her Brother Harry Gardiner (who was and would have beene very kind and helpfull to her) is since slaine, whereby the hopes of recovering 60 or £80 arrears for her use (the only supply she could expect to keepe her alive) is almost frustrated. She looks for her time wthin lesse then a month and I feare will want many necessaries. I doubt not but my wife will helpe her all she can to whome I spake to supply her farther (if she were necessitated) out of her pittance. . . . I wish I had a purse, estate and power answerable to my heart and desires to help all of her own name. How^l those mites I have I will cast in to their advantages, and especially to her, her father's shee-darlinge and soe like him. I heare since I came away that her bed mother and her husband are kinde to and sollicitous for her.'

Ralph writes to her from his exile: 'Sweetheart, I heare of your misfortune and suffer with you. I feel in a higher degree then either I can or will express. But at God's decree we must not repine. The best go first, and tis a mercy to be taken away from the evil to come. Were I able to advise or serve you in anything I should do it most gladly, but at this distance I know not well how.'

Henry Verney writes to Ralph: 'My sister was brought Oct. 1645. to bed of a gurl to all our grifes [because a boy would have made her more important to the Gardiners]. She is well . . . and intreated mee to desier you to lend her the blacke and yellow bed which standes in the inner rome in the parlour chamber; it is but a meane wan; if you can spare it, let her have it poore sole, I thinke she wants it.' Her condition was indeed pitiable: a widow at eighteen with a baby born some three months after its father's death. The child, the comfort and the grief of its mother, proved sickly, with weak eyes, and in later years became almost blind. The conduct of the Gardiners under the new circumstances changed entirely. When first she married, Cary, as the daughter of the influential Knight-Marshal, on intimate terms with the King, and sister of a man highly respected

on the parliament side, was a useful and valuable addition to the Gardiner family, who were proud of the connection. As the wife of the gallant young Sir Thomas, the eldest son of the house and warmly attached to her, she had been treated with the utmost consideration. Cary is described in all the letters as of a gentle, kindly, affectionate disposition, and in later times is spoken of as very good company. Now her father and husband were dead, and her brother in exile. She was nobody; she had not even a son and heir, and could be of no use in any schemes of aggrandisement. Her place at Cuddesdon, even her board, were grudged her; difficulties were made about her jointure. 'Sir tomas and my Lady' were extremely unkind, and Mrs. Isham and Doll Lecke write in the utmost indignation. Not long after her husband's death, Sir Thomas had made complaints of her, which Dr. Denton is confident she does not deserve. 'Ill instruments there will be, and she has suffered much from them, but I hope God in his due time will make her innocent carage appeare. I am extremely cozened if she be not much her father's daughter. In your absence I shall doe what I can for her, but I should be glad you were here to doe the businesse better. I pray write to her, for she hath need enough of comfort, and I know it would please her.'

The temper of the fierce old Solicitor-General was not improved by being turned out. 'I am sorry,' wrote Lady Sussex, 'they have put Sr Gardiner outt of his poste, becas i doubt it may be of some prejudis to your sister.' Cary with her baby took refuge at Claydon, where the other sisters were living at all odd times in great anxiety and poverty after the departure of Sir Ralph and his wife and the sequestration of the estate. They were even in some peril from the parties of lawless soldiers of both armies, who were continually passing to and fro.

It must indeed have been a sorrowful little household of women and children, with only the protection of Rowdes, the steward, and as unlike as possible to the cheerful, happy family party which had gathered at Claydon under the

wing of Sir Edmund and Dame Margaret in the previous ten years. From time to time Captain Edmund or Major Henry contrived to spend a few days with their sisters, which afforded them some protection; and once Captain Tom takes great credit to himself for having turned aside a detachment of soldiers 'att the surrender of Oxford, for I gave out to all those commanders that took up men for Flanders and other parts, that I marched to Claydon myself, therefore desired them to go another way, which they did.'

Life seemed bare and empty indeed to the forlorn young widow, but this was not to be the end. When Sir Ralph returned from long years of exile, he found his sister lovingly cared for by a kindly, amiable husband, very proud of his engaging young wife. In John Stewkeley's home at Preshaw existence had become altogether prosaic and comfortable—a great contrast to the wearing anxieties and the passionate earnestness with which both sides in the struggle were taking life when first Cary Verney was married.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RAISING OF THE STANDARD.

1642.

AFTER the attempt on the five members, the chance of any reconciliation between the King and his people became every day more hopeless.

Jan. 29,
1642.

The letters in the Verney correspondence reflect the growing alarm. Lady Sussex writes to Ralph: 'I pray god ther may bee agreement betwixt the kainge and his pepell and that pore eyrlande may have some helpe.' 'I am truly sorry to heare your parlyment goes on still in such a violent way. I pray god wee do not all cuffer by it. . . . you have put done the diurnals wee hear; I am sorry for it, for wee was glade to know what you dide.' Charles had gone to the north and endeavoured to gain possession of Hull. Sir John Hotham, the governor, however, had refused him entrance; Parliament had supported him in his resistance, and sent a peremptory order that the arms should be removed.

May 1642.

A petition in very high-flown language, for which Sir Francis Wortley, brother of Lady Sussex, was chiefly responsible, had been presented by some Yorkshire gentlemen in the name of the county, begging the King to forbid the removal of arms from Hull. Lady Sussex speaks her mind: 'my brother Wortly, foles man, hath put him selfe into a fare bisyness; sartinly great punnishment your parlyment will lay uppon them all; and I say I thinke the desERVE it, for them to oppose the parlyment in such a way;

when you right to me i pray sende me worde what you thinke will becom of them.' Again : ' I am sory to hear my brother wortly hath cariede himsefe so folisly. Ane unfortunat man he is every way—your parlyment suer will lay hevy punishment uppon him. i cannot but have some sense of him as he is my brother, but i may speke it to you, he hade never much of my hart for i thought him ever full of fanity, though belive me he hath many good parts hade he wisdom to have managede them.'

Mrs. More writes to Ralph at Westminster from Yorkshire, in great distress at the unsettled state of the country. ' I know you heare all the newes before we doe, thoe we are soe neare the kinge, for we see not the face of A sole. . . ' May 7,
1642.
 ' O that the swete parliment would com—with the olive branch in its mouth, it would refresh and glad all our harts here in the north. Wee are soe maney frightened peopell; for my part if I here but A dore creeke I take it to be A drom, and am reley to run out of that little valer I have. poore Sir John Hotham is so afrighted if anything comes but neere him, that when ouer goods com but to Harborow he sent to know what they ware. God he knows as there was nothing but clothes and 2 hogsheds of wine: the poore man is deseved if he thought to have found anycthing else. . . there hath bin A 100 with the King, and above, to have these greevaunces redrest, and he hath given them soe good content that they saye he is as proper A man as is in ingland. I wish May 21,
1642
 you all to take heed of wimen, for this vercy varmin have puld down an inclosure which sum of them ware put in prison for it by the justisis, that had their pipe to goe before them, and ther alle and cakes to make themselves merey when thay had done thare fetes of activity. I right you this newes to let you see what brave spirits is in the north. I wishe all ware well ended, for things stand in soe ill a condition here as we can make noe money of our Colpits. If rents faill and those faill to, we shall be in A hard case. You will not read my leter for I rit it in such haste I have ofered to read it myselfe but cannot, soe I will make an end,

and let you have it to trie what you can doe. Your faithful and loving Ante.'

Sir Edmund's position was a painful one, being bound in honour to fight for a cause with which he could not sympathise, while he was not entirely trusted by either side. No wonder that Lady Sussex describes him as 'full of sode thoughts.' In another letter she writes: 'Your father sende me worde the klinge hath given him leve to stay till he sendes for him: i am very glade of it for when he gooes i doubt the love of the parlyment hee will lose quite, which i fear will make them do him any ill offis the can. I am sory to hear the lordes are rasinge mony and hors; truly if the sende to my lorde wee will parte with non: i hope the will not for wee are pore, and my lorde of his estate but tenent for life cannot till how to pay a debt if we rone into it: your parlymente still goo so hye that i fear wee shall all bee runede by it.' 'Your father lyke a good sarvant i belive is much for his master, and so i thinke wee are all; i wish he may keepe that pouer that is fit for him, but I confes i woulde not have the papests to powerfull; the most of them I belive woulde be glade to see the prodistants of inglende in as misirable a condisyon as the are in Eyerlande, if it was in ther pouer to make them so. In a sue wekes now i hope wee shall see all that is intendede; i pray daly wee may have no ftinge' . . . 'Sir, Since I right this letter i resevede your last, many thinkes for your nues; truly the Lordes protestasyon my thinkes is a very good on; to defende the Kainges parson honor and estate and lafull progative, and priviledge of parlyment; my thinkes every on shoulde subscribe to this. I am loth to ete in puter yet, but truly i have put up most of my plat, and say it tis solde.'

June 20,
1642.

Ralph himself writes to Lady Barrymore: 'Peace and our liberties are the only things wee aime at; till wee have peace I am sure wee can enjoy noe liberties, and without our liberties I shall not heartily desire peace: both these togeather may make us all happy, but on without the other I must confesse can never satisfie mee.'

But though each party made use of nearly the same terms, the difficulty of agreement as to what constituted 'our liberties,' and the 'true Protestant religion,' was the rock on which all their negotiations inevitably split.

To the great distress of his father, Ralph Verney continued to hold with the Parliament, though the consequent estrangement between them made him utterly miserable, all the more as he evidently began to feel uncertain whether his party was not now going 'too hye,' as Lady Sussex so often repeated. Nothing could be less like the 'light heart' with which the two parties in France undertook the wars of the Fronde, just then beginning, than the spirit of Englishmen, Cavaliers and Puritans alike.

Lady Sussex thinks: 'both sides promisis so fare that i cannot see what it tis the shoulde fight for.' June 24,
1612.

Mrs. Pure continues her lamentations: 'I am in such a great rage with the parliment as nothing will passify me, for thay promised as all should be well, if my Lord Straford's hed ware of, and since then there is nothing beter, but I thinke we shall be undon with taxis, and if wee have no rents neither, it will be a hard cace. This daye the King hath set forth an answer to a boocke as cam forth 26 of Maye. I here as he will set but on more forth, and that shall conclud all; and so much for riting. We here strange newes from London, which is that maney have oferid to keepe horses for the parliment to fight against there kinge, and that my lord of Holoud is generald, which puts me in the most comfort that we shall have pence, for he hath had good sortewen not to fight hitherto [he had, indeed, been suspected of cowardice]. I hope he will prove luckey still.' June 20,
1612.

Possibly Sir Edmund still had hopes of an agreement between the King and the Parliament. Lady Sussex writes at the end of June: 'I pray god your parlyment may still continue in the good mynde the was in; for i harde ther was something sude that showede the was will inclynede to an accomadatyon: if that good worke was nowe don i hope we may live to see some good times agane, and our frinde happy and cherfull. . . .'

The 'likelihood of an accomidasyon' proved an illusion. The last propositions of the Parliament had been indignantly rejected by Charles, who declared that, should he grant such demands, he 'would no longer be more than the image, but the mere shadow of a king.'

June 19,
1642.

Though Sir Edmund did not join the King at York until July, he had made preparations for the war which seemed inevitable. He wrote to his steward to get his horses into condition in view of a campaign: 'I praye take upp my mare . . . and lett her be kept att house. I shall shortly send for my coach mairs. When my mare Lea hath foaled, let the foale bee knockt on the head, and the mare taken to Howse, for I cannot spare her this summer . . . There will be a press shortly in the country. I praye let there bee care taken to thinck of some able boddyed young man to goe in King's roome for I am loth he should goe.' 'When I sent for my Arms I forgott to send for one peece as I thinck, and that was for my Gorgett, it is that which goes about the neck, I pray lett Will Browne looke for it, and fail not to send it to mee to bee heere on Tuesday. . . . Send mee word wheather Tom Isham has bought mee another gelding or noe, you shall receave a saddle from Mr. Busby, lett it bee well layed upp, bidd the groomme bee carefull of my Horses.' Ralph had also written for 'a paire of my father's Pistolls of the Best sort; my father tells mee there is a paire that have White Stocks, and part of the Locks are Blew, and they are very light. Let Moses bring them upp, and bee carefull to keepe them from wett, and let the Moulds, and other implements belonging to them come upp with them.'

June 30,
1642.

On July 11 it was declared by both Houses that the King had begun the war. He had granted commissions for raising cavalry, and had placed himself at the head of a small force at Beverley. It was resolved in the Commons that an army of 10,000 men should at once be raised, and Lord Essex was appointed general.

July 21,
1642.

Sir Edmund now writes to his steward from York, with sad anticipation of the bad times to come: 'I praye have

the carbines att home in reddyng for the defence of the Howse if need bee; and gett powder and Bullettts reddy; for I feare a time maye come when Roages maye looke for booty in such houses; therfore bee not unprovided; but saye noething of it, for that maye invite more to mischeefe that thinck not of it yett.' Again: 'I praye have a care of my howse, that roages break not into it, have stoare of bullett and powder, and gett some boddly to lodg in the howse that maye defend it if need bee. Have my waggon in readiness, if I should att any time send for it; gett in all such monnyys as are owing you with all speede, for wee shall certainly have a great warr. Have a care of harvest, and God send uss well to receave the blessing of and returne thancks for it. I can saye no more—Your loving master.' Ralph commendts Roades: 'You have lodged the people in y^e hous very well. I pray, bee careful of the Dores in y^e Daytime. . . . I thinke 2 men were enough to watch in y^e Towne a nights, untell the times grow fuller of dainger.'

Aug. 2.
1642.

Cary Gardiner, writing from the neighbourhood of Oxford, says: 'Here is nothing but soulgers going up and down. The first that came, under the command of Col: Brown, a cochman, passed very quickly away, and leste no scores. But Coll: Goodwin's soulgers, and those that came to guard Lord Saye's person has pillaged all the colleges but three already, and this day are about the rest; and say when they have don they will see what pillage the contry has, so, for aught as I see, we are lik to be undone. My lady Lee on Thursday came to Oxford to speake with my lord Saye concerning the armes she had sent to the Kinge. If she could she would have made peace with him. But he not being a courtier would not listen to her, so she returned away with a great blame the contry laid upon her; her being a widow made her to be a little pittied, twas that her fearfulness.'

A short time before, Hyde had taken refuge with Lady Lee at Ditchley, fearing to be stopped on his road to join the King at York. My lady's coach with six horses carried

him on his way, so that Lady Lee was in bad odour with the Parliament.

July 25,
1642.

Lady Sussex writes: 'My lady Monmouth hath bene with me, how [who] is a much trubled woman; she fiers all will goo as ill as may bee, but i have bettir hopes.'

Aug. 4,
1642.

Mrs. Eure is more despairing: 'In my poore jugment this times can bring no good end to them: all that wimen can dou is to praye for beter, for sure it is an ill time with them of all cretuers for thay are exposed to all vilinoeys. God can turne all this in A moment; it is want of ower prayers that this jugmentes are com uppon a nation.'

Aug. 22,
1642.

In another letter: 'I am much troubled to see things goo as they dou; it will bring us all to rewin; neither papist, nor puritan, aye nor protestant but will be the losers by it, I believe but I trust in God as he will helpe us, for man is unabell of himselfe to doe anyething, and that I doe dailey see. I pray God as that side may prevaile as hath truth on its side.'

War preparations were vigorously carried forward on both sides. The 22nd of August 1642 was a memorable day in Sir Edmund Verney's career. The King set up the royal standard at Nottingham and confided it to his keeping. A good deal of outward pomp marked the occasion, though flashing armour and bright sword-scarves covered heavy hearts.

The standard itself needed twenty supporters; it was 'much of the fashion of the City Streamers used at the Lord Mayor's Show,' old Rushworth tells us, 'and on the top of it hung a Flag, the King's Arms quartered, with a Hand pointing to the Crown . . . with this motto, Give Cesar his due'; but *what* was Cæsar's due had yet to be determined in many a hard-fought field. There were several 'Knights, Baronets, and three Troops of Horse to wait upon the Standard and to bear the same backwards and forwards with about 600 Foot Souldiers. It was conducted to the Field in great State, before His Majesty, the Prince [of Wales], Prince Rupert, and divers other Lords and Gentlemen . . . besides a great company of Horse and Foot in

all to the number of 2,000.' At the last moment, when the trumpets were to sound and the herald at arms was to make a proclamation of the causes of setting up the standard, the King, with characteristic vacillation, called for the paper, made some hasty erasures, and gave it back to the herald, 'who proclaimed the same to the People though with some Difficulty after his Majesty's Corrections . . . and the whole Multitude threw up their Hats and cried God save the King.' The standard was carried back into the castle at night, and the same ceremony was gone through in the King's presence on the two following days, 'with sound of drums and Trumpets.'

But in spite of Rushworth's impressive capitals, the People and the Multitude, in a military sense at all events, were conspicuous by their absence. 'Melancholy men,' says Clarendon, 'observed many ill Presages about that time. There was not one Regiment of foot yet drawn thither, so that the Train'd-bands, which the Sheriff had drawn together, were all the strength the King had for his Person, and the Guard of the Standard. There appeared no Conflux of Men in obedience to the Proclamation; the Armes, and Ammunition were not yet come from York, and a General Sadness cover'd the whole Town.'

Finally, to complete the mournful signs of the times, the standard 'was blown down . . . by a very strong and unruly wind, and could not be fixed again in a day or two, till the tempest was allayed.' But Sir Edmund Verney was no fair-weather friend. 'Severely honest in time of peace and undauntedly valiant in time of war,' he had won what every soldier covets—the post of honour and of danger, and he said as he accepted the charge: 'That by the grace of God (his word always) they that would wrest that standard from his hand, must first wrest his soul from his body.'¹ His title of Knight-Marshal, with its more peaceful duties, was merged in that of 'the Standard-Bearer,' by which he is henceforth distinguished in the family annals.

Doll Leeke, who, in attendance on Lady Sydenham, was

¹ *Lloyd's Memorials*.

Aug. 23,
1612.

with a part of the royal army, writes to Ralph to reassure him about his father: 'the enemy are very near us; my unkeill will not be amongst them, for the King has given him the Standard, and he must goe no further then that; it will not remove this 3 or 4 dayes, and so long he will be safe.' She had written confidently to Lady Verney from York, a fortnight before: 'the King is in very good condition and increaseth in strength every day; we have nothing but good nuse to send you.' She still hoped apparently that Ralph would go the same way as his father: 'I for my part wish for no more men but your husband, and I do so hartly desire him that I dreame of nothing els. I am confident that he will come. I pray tell him so and present my serves to him.'

Sept. 1,
1612.

She writes again from the camp to Lady Verney: 'For my confidence of our having the better of the parlement I do not remember, but if thay will promis to fight no better it will strenghten my hopes; but I cannot se if we have the better how you will sufer, for sure your father will have power to save your husband, and if the King faill I beleve my unkeill will hardly come of with his life or any that are with them; therfor your condision is not so bad as you beleve it, at least I conseve so. I think non in more dainger then myself and our company, for if we lous the day, what will become of us I know not. We do not louk for any faver of the other side. I do not love to think of it and I trust I shall not live to se it. Part of our trouble now is that the wether grous could and it will be ill traveling, and we have those things which should have kept us warme at Yorke; but by that time we have folloed the camp another yeare we shall have more witt.'

Sept. 2,
1612.

Lady Sydenham (whose quaint spelling suggests a lisp in F) writes in a more anxious strain: 'My dere hart, i ded long for your anser of min, becaus that you ded exspres a trobell in yours to me about your hosbands reselushons. My dere hart now i hope that you ar resalefed of what he will do, and that i finde is better to won [one], thin to lefey betwen hopes and fars what will happen. i kno he has chossen the strongest part, but i cannot thinke the best, but

i am confedent he dus beleve tis the best, and for that he chos it. But truly my hart it staggers me that he shold not seclerly all thar wayes, being it tis so aparrant, for how tis for the lebberty of the subget to tacke all from thim which ar not of thar mind, and to puld don thar houses, and impresen thim, and levef thim to the marsy of the unruly multetude—i cannot fined that this is the lebberty of the subgete. Nor do i find that it is in god's lay [law] to tacke arms against thar laful king to depos him, for shuer thay havef not mad his parrsen knon to all thos that they havef implied in this war to spare him and not to kill him. But i trost god will protecket him, and my dere if any of my frinds fall in this quarill i trost thar soles will be happy, for shuer tis laful to fitt for won's laful king. i ded belevef that thay wold resafe the king's mesech as thay havef don whin it was sent, for shuer tis not pese which thay desier; shuer thay trost in that myti hoste. Dere hart you say in your leter that i sholed mistrost your lovef to me becaus that i hafe not resafed your leters; truly my dere it was never grondid uppon such a weeke fondashon as to let such a thing shacke it, for you won my hart by your worth, and till I fined that wanting i cannot let my lovef gro les; for tho you shold not ryet yet i shold be confedent that you loveded me, for i am shuer till i do sumthing to desarf your desfavor i shall belese i havef it, and i am confedent that i never shall never do any thing to lesen your good openyon of me, for my dere i do lovef you with my sole. . . . Thar is non that you havef a more abslate power over thin her that is fathfully your tru frind and houbell sarvant to my last of beinge. Anne S.'

Lady Sussex hears a less favourable report of the King's cause, and rejoices that he has sent Lord Southampton with Culpepper and Uvedale to London with a proposal that a commission should be appointed to discuss terms: 'i hope wec shall have now the blesinge of pese, my lordes sashamton and dosete sent to boro my koch as the went by, and truly i coulde not bee so unsivell to denye itt. i hope i dide not do a mise they gooinge about so good a worke. I hear there hath bene a good yonge captin of the kainges side since with

Aug. 28,
1642.

S^r Tomis Mutis, and he I belive hath tolde the truth of all; wee shall have noe fitinge, for the kainge hath neither mony nor men. Ther cam in fue or non att all affir the standarde was set up, it semes the kainge sent and gave much of his monyes to the trane bandes in yorkesher and other places, thinkainge to make them suer to him, and when he woulde have hade them they all fell of, and sade the woulde not fite aganst ther brethrne, and ever daye his army lcones, the fall away from him; this yonge man was att coventry; to or thre and twenty was kailde; on of my lorde Scidmor's brothers was shot in the arme so clos to his shoulder that is arme must bee cut of. My lorde doset sent me worde hee woulde wate uppon me within fue dayes, but i presume that was but in a compliment, i hope he doth not intende it; he sade he hade brought that which woulde bringe pese if the parlyment woulde harken to it; suer the may make ther one condisyons now. God's power is above all, wee coulde not have thoght this woulde have bene within this fue dayes, for that side to submite furst; sartinly the good prayrs hath prefaled much; now i beelive ther will bec much bisynes in the parlyment shorly.'

In reply to the King's proposal the Parliament had refused to treat until the royal standard should be taken down, and the charge of treason against their members withdrawn. Ralph had taken the oath of adherence to the Parliamentary cause, and was now therefore in avowed opposition to the King and to Sir Edmund. It was no light matter in those days to take the side of the Parliament; the points in dispute were matters of life and death to every individual, male and female, in the kingdom, and the agony of doubt upon questions which are now to us as clear as the day must have been as the dividing asunder of soul and body.

Lady Sussex, who loves both father and son so much, does her best to keep them together: 'i finde by your father's letter you sent me done, he is a most sade man. i pray God he may do well, i fear his troubles togather will make an end of him. He was at Kailingsworth with the Kinge i harde

from my lady Monmouth. Mr Tyerman was this last wike at Nottingham, about a good liveinge, but he faled of it; he did not see your father. He supped with my lord keeper [Lyttelton] who lyes in a minister's hose; he told me in discors to him he wished he had never knone the court. That silver my lorde Warwicke sent in when i was at Chelsey, itt seemes was expectede at Nottingham'—plate which Lord Warwick was evidently concealing to avoid sending to the help of the King.

About September 9 she has had a letter from Sir Edmund. 'It was a very sade on and his worde was this of you; "madam he hath ever lane near my hart and truly he is ther still"; that he had many affliction upon him, and that you had used him unkindly; this was the effect of itt. The paper you sent of is [his] letter to you i bornt presently; i shall never open my lipes of that nor any thinge else you trust me with; he is passynate, and much trubled i belive that you declarede yourselfe for the parlyment: a littill time will disgest all I am confident; may bee he woulde have the Kainge thinke hee was a littill displeased with you for goinge that way: if you can be absent from the parlyment i thinke it woulde be very will: i am suer i shoulde thinke it a very great happines to me your companye and your swite ladyes. Now lett me intrete you as a frende that loves you most hartly, not to right passynatly to your father, but ovour com him with kindnes; good man I see hee is infinety malincoly, for many other thinges i belive besides the difference betwixt you. For god sake give nothings to the parlyment drectly nor indrectly: i hope in the lorde ther will bee pese; the parlyment will show ther great strenth, which sartinly will case the Kainge to yealde to most of ther demandes . . . wee have great store of sogers now att Senta-borns cam tonight and the say threscore cartis of amanisyon and thinge for that use, and ten great peses drane upon whiles, and the Indes of court gentillmen to garde my lordes parson is com too, the say very fine and well horsede. If this soger be passede, i hope wee shall have no more to friton us. . . . My lorde Willmot hath bene a soger; an experincede

man he is, ther fore it tis will to make him safe. Mr. Goringe i hope must bee punishide sondly. God hath blesede all your prosidinges in parlyment wonderfully. . . . I belive the quine will bee hear shorly, Doctor Myorne tolde me he harde soe much. This lettir I becech you sende to your father by the next opportunity: i have chidden him truly and sade as well as i can to him.' The next day: 'I sente you a cribled paper yester day, but that i desierde i see is not to bee hade, for my lorde of Essex is gon by.' She has just received a letter from Sir Edmund: 'i see hee findes some more of his frindes goo of from what he expectede. . . . He sath the [the royalists] are stronger then is belivede.' A few days later: 'I see you to much appryhende this unhapye diffirence betwixt your father and selfe: i am very confident a littill time will make all will agane and his affeyon to you ase deare and harty as ever. i pray bee not sade; that will doo you a great dell of hurt i am suer. If it ples God your father retorne, i hope one discorse or to, will make all will agane betwixt you. If Mrs. Sidnam and the rest of your frindes with him be not harty in doinge all good offeses betwixt you, the are most file unworthy pepell. If you hade faled in any thinge of duty or love to him it hade bene some jost case of exceptyon, but in goinge the way your cousince telles you to be right, i hope he hath more goodnes and religone then to continue in displeuer with you for it.'

Sept. 12,
1642.

In her next letter: 'I am truly sorry to hear the Kainge is returnede from Nottingham i fear he will make this a tedious bissyne, and much blode will bee spilte befor ther be ane ende of it . . . Sir tomis chike i belive is not att all plesede with his sone rogers beinge strenth [aide-de-camp] to my lorde Harfort. As i am thus far of my litter i hear the Kainge hath sente an other mesage to your parlyment, i pray God it bee a good one your father will cuffer many wayes i fear if the Kainge gos on in this way he begins: sende not my letter to him, i pray, till you mete with a safe messenger.'

Sept. 16,
1642.

After the middle of September there are no letters from

Lady Sussex for a month ; Ralph was apparently staying with her. Whether his father wrote to him during all this time does not appear ; there are no letters to be found after the beginning of August.

O tell me, friends, while yet ye hear—
May it not be, some coming year,
These ancient paths that here divide
Shall yet again run side by side,
And you from there, and I from here,
All on a sudden reappear ?
O tell me, friends, while yet ye hear !—CLOUGH.

CHAPTER XIX.

SIR EDMUND STRIKES HIS LAST BLOW FOR THE KING.

1642.

IN the course of the two months that had elapsed from the raising of the standard, 'that low despised condition the King was in' had considerably improved.

On October 12, 1642, Charles advanced from Shrewsbury, and decided to march upon London, the road to which lay open, and he had been two days on the way before Lord Essex, commanding the parliamentary army at Worcester, became aware of his design. London was only defended by the trained bands, and if Charles had marched directly on the Houses of Parliament, he might perhaps have ended the war. But 'unhappy jealousies were quickly discovered' among his commanders. Prince Rupert would receive no orders from Lord Lindsey, the general-in-chief, and quarrelled with Lord Falkland, 'a very evil presage.' 'The two armies, though they were but 20 miles asunder, when they first set forth, and both marched the same way, gave not the least disquiet in ten days march to each other; and in truth as it appeared afterwards, neither army knew where the other was'!¹

The King had reached Edgecot near Banbury. The Royalist account given in Rushworth says that on Sunday morning at three o'clock he received intelligence of the approach of the rebels, upon which he gave orders for the whole army to march to Edgehill, about four miles off. Here they perceived the Parliament's army drawn out in

¹ Clarendon's *History*, Book VI.



Van Dyke.

PORTRAIT OF CHARLES I.
(Given by the King to Sir Edmund Verney)

the valley below. The hill is very truly an edge, where the high tableland extending towards Banbury breaks off in a precipitous wooded descent, to the flat ground below Kington. On the very 'edge' itself is a solitary old inn, 'The Sun Rising' (which existed at the time of the battle), with a magnificent view over the great sea of plain and low hills reaching to the Malvern range on the north-west. Here Charles breakfasted on the morning of the 23rd, attended by Sir Edmund Verney, and here he left the two boy princes, Charles and James, aged twelve and ten, with their tutor, Dr. Harvey.

The King's position on the high ground was extremely strong, but it was impossible for him to delay the action. He was for the moment superior in numbers to the enemy, and his cavalry could act with great advantage in the plain below; moreover, the country round belonged chiefly to the Lords Brooke and Saye and Sele, who were bitterly hostile to him; the soldiers had been forty-eight hours almost without food, and the people were so disaffected that the army could obtain 'neither meat for man or horse,' nor information, and the smiths hid themselves so that the troopers' horses could not be shod, 'of which in those stony ways there was great need.' Charles therefore resolved to give battle, and the troops were marched down the hill; 'but before that was done and the King's artillery came, it was past two in the afternoon.'

The infantry in the centre of the royal army was commanded by Lord Ruthven and Sir Jacob Astley: Lord Lindsey, accompanied by his son Lord Willoughby, commanded the regiment of guards in which was the King's standard, carried by Sir Edmund Verney, while the insubordinate Prince Rupert was at the head of the right wing of horse. Behind, a little to the right, came the King with his pensioners; he rode clad in armour, and wearing over it a black velvet mantle whereon was his star and garter, with a steel cap covered with velvet on his head. He addressed his troops briefly, 'but yet lovingly and loyally toward you our loyal army,' 'Your King bids you be courageous, and

Heaven make you victorious.' The prayer breathed by the veteran Sir Jacob, immediately before the advance, was remembered afterwards :—' Oh Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget thee, do not thou forget me. March on, boys!'

A successful charge by Prince Rupert broke through the enemy: both cavalry and infantry gave way before him, except Lord Brooke's purple coats and Denzil Hollis's red coats, and the pursuit lasted for three miles across the open fields. Here, however, it ended ignominiously in the plunder of the baggage-waggons which had been left unguarded.

Meantime the King's troops, unsupported by cavalry, had not been able to stand against the onslaught of Essex, and before Prince Rupert came back from the pursuit the tide of battle had turned; the King's guards were broken, and, had the advantage been followed up, Charles himself would have been in great danger. The struggle around the standard was furious 'in the extrem.' It was evidently not the one that had required twenty men to set up at Nottingham, for we are told by old Lloyd that Sir Edmund 'adventured with' it among the enemy, in order that 'the souldiers might be engaged to follow him. He was offered his life by a throng of his enemies, upon condition he would deliver the standard; he answered that his life was his own, but the standard was his and their sovereign's, and he would not deliver it while he lived, and he hoped it would be rescued . . . when he was dead; selling it and his life, at the rate of sixteen gentlemen which fell that day by his sword.' The standard was taken, and round its staff (says tradition) still clung the hand which had grasped it, faithful in death. On one of the fingers was the ring given to Sir Edmund by the King, and containing his miniature. The ring still exists and the worm-eaten effigy called Sir Edmund's hand—and if any should dispute the truth of the story, are they not to be seen at Claydon to this very day?

But to return to the battlefield. The royal army was hard pressed, the short evening was closing in; the parlia-

ment forces had suffered a good deal, Essex could not be persuaded to advance up to the higher ground, and the fighting came to an end, neither party having gained any decisive advantage. The roads were crowded with the dead and wounded; five thousand men, indeed, had fallen on the field, the proportion belonging to each party 'being very stiffly debated.' The King certainly lost more persons of distinction. Lord Landsy was taken up mortally wounded, and died before he could be carried to Warwick, where his son was taken prisoner; Sir Edmund Verney and George Stewart, Lord Aubigny were dead. The battle was, in fact, a drawn one, but it was clear that the parliamentary troopers could not stand against the Cavaliers, and the Royalists claimed the honours of the day.

On the other hand the 'relation communicated to the Speaker and Commons' gives 'a narration of a blessed victory which God hath given us upon the army of the Cavaliers and of those Evil Persons, who upon Sunday 23 of this Instant engaged his Majesty in a dangerous and bloody Fight against his faithfull subjects.' This official account mentions amongst special mercies that 'Sir Edmund Verney who carried the King's Standard was slain by a gentleman of the Lord General's Troop of Horse, who did much other good Service that Day, and the Standard taken; which was afterwards by the Lord General himself delivered unto his Secretary, Mr. Chambers, with an intention to send it back the next day unto his Majesty: but the Secretary, after he had carried it long in his hand, suffered it to be taken away by some of our Troopers, and as yet we cannot learn where it is.' . . . We are, however, better informed; Dr. Gardiner¹ has told how Captain Smith, of Skilts, co. Warwick, a Catholic officer of the King's Life Guards, disguising himself with an orange scarf which he picked up on the field, slipped through the enemy's ranks, told Essex's secretary that so great a prize was not fitly bestowed in the hands of a penman, and snatched it from him. He made his way back and triumphantly laid the recovered

¹ *Great Civil War*, vol. i. 57.

standard at the feet of the King, who rewarded him with hearty thanks and knighted him on the spot. It is possible that Captain Smith at the same time found and saved Sir Edmund's ring.

Oct. 27,
1642.

Sir Edward Sydenham's account, written from 'Ano on the hill,' close by, was sent by hand to Ralph. 'For all our great vycktorie I have had the greatest loss by the death of your nobell father that ever anie freind did . . . he himselfe killed two with his owne hands, whereof one of them had killed poore Jason, and brocke the poynt of his standard at push of pike before he fell, which was the last account I could receive of anie of our owne syde of him. The next day the kinge sent a harald to offer mercie to all that would laye downe armes, and to enquire for my Lord of Lynsee, my Lo Wyllowby and him; he brought word that my Lo Lynsee was hurt, your father dead, and my Lo Wyllowby only prysoner; he would nither put on armes or buff cote the day of battell, the reason I know not; the battell was bloody on your syde, for your hoorss rann away at the first charge, and our men had the execution of them for three miles; it began at 3 a clock and ended at syx. The kinge is a man of the least feare and the greatest mercie and resolution that ever I saw, and had he not bin in the fylde, we might have suffered. My Lord of Essex is retired in great disorder to Warwick, for the next morninge he suffred his connon to be taken away within muskett shott of his armie, and never offred to hindir them; it is sayd ther was killed and run away since, eaygtt thowsand of his armie. This day the kinge tooke in bamberie; our armie dayly increases; god in mercie send us peace, and although your loss be as great as a sonn can loose in a father, yitt god's chyl dren must beare with patience what afflycktion soever he shall please to laye upon them. You have a great tryall, god in mercie give you grace to make a santified use of this great afflycktion, and to undergoe this great burden with patience. My humbell sarvise to your sad wyfe. God of his infinite mercie cumfort you bothe which shall be the prayers of your freind and sarvant who shall ever be reddie to performe anie sarvise in the power

of your Ed : Sidenham. Ther is delivered to me fyftie two cornetts and colors which was taken ; I beleeeve ther be manie more.'

Lady Sussex has had independent tidings, and writes to Ralph from Chelsea : ' The most heavy nues of your worthy good father's death is come to mee, for which i have the sadist hart and depest wondede sole that ever cretuer hade ; he beinge i confes to you the greatist comfort of my life ; i pray god fitt me for ane other ; for i am suer i shall never have more ioy in this. Your lose, i am very sensable is infinat to : i pray god give us both pasynce. My stay will bee hear till tusday i thinke ; and though it be an unfitt requist att this time, yet let me bege the favour to see you before i goo home, for you are all the ioy i have left mee now ; i am in so missirable a condisyoun that i cannot expres my thoughts : my eyes are so full that I cannot say no more ; but that i am your most sorifull and most allictiede frinde Elenor Sussex.'

Ralph replies : ' Maddam, I never lov'd to bee the messenger of ill newes : therfore I forbore to send you this ; Oct. 27,
1642. which is the saddest and deepest affliction that ever befell any poore distressed man ; I will not add to your greife by relating my owne deplorable condition, neither can my pen expresse the meseries I am in ; God's will bee donu, and give mee patience, to support mee in this extremity. there is noe absolute certainty of his Death, that I can yet learne, but sure tis too true. I have sent 3 messengers to both armies to bie informed. on Satterday I expect on of them Back, in the meantime I am forced to make dilligent enquiries after that which (if it proove true) will make mee most unhappy. I know you are fully sensible of my misfortune, therfore I will say noe more, but humbly begg of you for his sake to continue mee in your favour, and receive mee into your protection, for if hee is gon, I have noe freind in this world but your selfe ; therfore I must once more bescech your Ladyshipp ever for his sake that served you soe faithfully, and valued and honord you soe farr above all other creatures, that you will bee pleasd to preserve mee in your

good oppinion and esteem me, as I am Maddam, your most faithful, though most sorrowfull most afflicted and most unfortunate servant R. V. I will obay you in waiting uppon you, before you goe downe, soe I might see noe other creature but your selfe.'

The news that Sir Edmund was slain filled his family and household with horror and consternation, and the old pathetic words 'they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth' seemed to describe the state of Claydon. Ralph had this poignant addition to his grief, that political differences had made the affectionate relations of a lifetime strained and difficult at the last. To his faithful retainers and to Rowles, who had witnessed Sir Edmund's will, it must have been especially distressing to be unable to carry out his directions, which had seemed so simple and natural when given—'my body I will shall be interred in ye chancel of ye Parish church of Middle Claydon.' Ralph did not at once abandon hope that this pious duty might yet be performed; he writes to Lady Sussex of his final disappointment:

Oct. 31,
1642.

'Maddam, Last night I had a servant from my Lord of Essex Army, that tells mee there is noe possibility of finding my Deare father's Body, for my Lord Generall, my Lord Brooke, my Lord Grey, Sr Jam Lake and twenty others of my acquaintance assured him hee was never taken prisoner, neither were any of them ever possessed of his Body; but that hee was slaine by an ordinary Trooper. Upon this my man went to all the ministers of severall parishes, that buried the dead that were slaine in the battle, and none of them can give him any information of the body. One of them told him my Lord Aubigney was like to have been buried in the feilds, but that on came by chance that knew him and tooke him into a church, and there laid him in the ground without soe much as a sheete about him, and soe divers others of good quallity were buried: the ministers kept Tallies of all that were buried, and they amount to neare 4,000. Maddam you see I am every way unhappy.'

Lady Sussex replies the same day.

'My soro is beyonde all that can bee sade; it tis not

possibly to bee greter then it tis; but truly it trubles me much that his body was beriede amonst the multitude; i know itt coude not have addede anythinge to him, only have sattisfiede his frindes to have hade a cristan beriall; but itt semes in war ther is no differince made. God's will most bee don in all things, i hope hee is bleside and happy.'

Sir Edmund had left home in his usual health, the children and servants had since seen his grooms and his horses starting off to join him—there had been no illness, and no funeral—Claydon had no tangible proof that the beloved master was actually dead. Ghost-stories were rife in the villages, and Sir Edmund's ghost, seeking its hand, long continued to haunt not only the battlefield where he fell, but the old house where he dwelt, and the spinneys surrounding it.

Sir Edmund's death seems to have produced a great sensation in the neighbourhood of Edgehill. A curious old pamphlet,¹ published three months after the battle, relates that 'portentious apparitions of two jarring and contrary armies where the battell was strucken, were seen at Edge Hill, where are still many unburied karkasses, at between twelve and one of the clock in the morning. As was certified by Persons of Qualitie. These infernal souldiers appeared on Christmas night, and again on two Saturdays after, bearing the King's and Parliament's colours. Pell mell to it they went, where the corporeall armies had shed so much blood, the clattering of arnes, noyse of Cannons, cries of soldiers, sounds of petronels, and the alarm was struck up, creating great terrour and amazement. The rumour whereof comming to his Majestie at Oxford, he sent Colonel Kirke and 5 other gentlemen of Credit, who all saw the fore-mentioned prodigies, distinctly knowing divers of the apparitions and incorporeall substances by their faces, as that of Sir Edmund Varney [the only one, however, named] and others, that were there slaine.'

'A sign of God's wrath, and a proof of the Divills

¹ See p. 277, Note.

dispersed in the empty regions of the Ayre,' is all the explanation vouchsafed for the 'prodigy' thus testified to by 'gentlemen of credit.'

Sir Edmund was succeeded in the office of Knight-Marshal by Sir Edward Sydenham, who writes to Ralph to request 'that I maye have your estate bothe of the prysson [the Marshalsea] and goods ther upon such tearmes as you will parte with them to another.' He was so well satisfied with Ralph's arrangement that Lady Anne Sydenham writes warmly of 'the hobblegashons' they are under, and adds, 'You woled never havef chised out me to havef heped your favors on had you not a ben best plesed with doing corteses to thos that coled gevel no retorn.'

In the 'Life of Clarendon' there is a graphic account of a conversation between him and Sir Edmund. 'Mr. Hyde was wont often to relate a passage in that melancholick Time, when the Standard was set up at Nottingham, with which he was much affected. Sir Edmund Varney Knight Marshal, who was mentioned before as Standard Bearer, with whom he had great Familiarity, who was a Man of great Courage and generally beloved, came one day to him and told him, "He was very glad to see him, in so universal a damp under which the spirits of most men were oppressed, retain still his natural cheerfulness and vivacity . . ." Hyde said that they could not do the King better service, than by making it their business to raise the dejected minds of men, and root out those apprehensions which . . . could do no good, and did really much mischief. Sir Edmund replied smiling, "I will willingly join with you the best I can, but I shall act it very scurvily. My condition," said he, "is much worse than yours, and different, I believe, from any other man's, and will very well justify the melancholick that I confess to you possesses me. You have satisfaction in your conscience that you are in the right; that the King ought not to grant what is required of him; and so you do your duty and your business together. But for my part I do not like the quarrel, and do heartily wish that the King would yield and consent to what they desire, so that my

conscience is only concerned in honour and gratitude to follow my master. I have eaten his bread and served him near thirty years, and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him; and choose rather to lose my Life (which I am sure I shall do) to preserve and defend those things which are against my conscience to preserve and defend. For I will deal freely with you, I have no reverence for the Bishops, for whom this Quarrel subsists." It was not a time to dispute, and his affection to the Church had never been suspected. He was as good as his word, and was killed at the battle of Edgehill within two months after this discourse. And if those who had the same and greater obligations had observed the same rules of gratitude and generosity, whatever their other affections had been, that battle had never been fought, nor any of that mischief been brought to pass, that succeeded it.'

Lloyd's testimony to his high and noble character is equally emphatic: 'This stout man . . . was severely honest in time of peace, and undauntedly valiant in time of war. . . . One of the strictness and piety of a Puritan, of the charity of a Papist, of the civility of an Englishman; whose family the King his Master would say, "was the model he would propose to the Gentlemen," whose carriage was such that he was called "the only courtier that was not complained of."'

Note.—The pamphlet published January 23, 1642/3, was entitled, 'A Great Wonder in Heaven: shewing the late Apparitions and prodigious noyses of War and Battels, seen on Edge-Hill, neere Keinton in Northamptonshire, Certified under the hands of Wm. Wood, Justice for the Peace in the said county, Samuel Marshall, preacher of God's word in Keinton, and other Persons of Qualitie.' A picture by Sir John Gilbert at Birmingham, 'The Phantom Horsemen,' is of this scene.

CHAPTER XX.

CAPTAIN EDMUND VERNEY IN IRELAND.

1641-1643.

AFTER Dame Margaret Verney's death, a bright gleam came into the lives of her girls at Claydon, in a visit from their brother Mun between two campaigns. In the autumn of 1641, the army sent against the Scots was disbanded or 'cashiered' as he phrased it, and though his pay was hopelessly in arrears, and his future uncertain, the young soldier gave himself up to the enjoyment of home life. He writes playful complaints of his sisters. 'I never yet saw such double diligence used in the tormenting a poore man. . . . I cannot live long if these thunder-claps continue.' Pen writes of him as 'My dearest combeannion the casseir Capitaine,' and Cary desires to have him much with her. Doll Leeke was equally devoted to him, and when his short stay is brought to an end by news of the rising in Ireland, she writes to Mary: 'I find by my cosen Mun that he is gon; he writs me word that he hath left with you a ring of his hare. Beshrew him for his conseat, it shews so like a legisi that it has put a sadness into me; it is a fault to be superstitious, and therfore if I can I will forget it.'

Edmund replenished his wardrobe, ordered a special suit of clothes from his father's tailor, with gold and silver braid, 'chiefly fitt for London,' received his Captain's commission in the army despatched to Ireland, and rode in haste to West Chester, where they were to embark.

'I have now been here this nine days,' he writes to Ralph, 'sooner by four than the first that came; five of our companions have not yet come up' . . . 'I am in infinite

Dec. 11,
1641.

haste, but I will write more largely by Hinton,¹ by whom I will send my horses next Monday.'

'Now we are lyke to come to an active service. I heare Kit Roper, with 4 more captaines and theire companyes, are cutte of to 14 men ass they were attempting to relieve Tredan. My collonell's regiment is much desired, and if wee have a fayre winde wee shall be there within 4 or 5 dayes. Here lyes my lord Parsons his sonne, who hath very good intelligence, and his friends write to him they are in a great doubt Dublin will be beseiged before wee can get over, for the rebells, hearing of our neare approach, resolve to attempt ass high ass they can possibly before our arrivall. Never was more barbarousness practised amongst the Hethen then they use now amongst men of very good quality. I hope wee shall be a good meanes to repell them, but wee are but an handfull, and I believe you will be forced (notwithstanding the tunc of yeare) to send 10 times our number suddenly over. All our care here is how we shall get next month's pay . . . I pray have a mayne care of that both now and hereafter, and then wee will fight lustily for you, but otherwise, noe longer Pype noe longer dance.' The 'scarlet cloake and shamoy doublet with the silver and gold edging' have not arrived; they may be paid for out of the money 'received from Sir Wm. Uvedale' as due to him; letters are to be addressed to the care of Alderman Edwards and may be sent in the 'Lord Leivetenant's carryages.'

A week later they were still at West Chester waiting for a fair wind. He writes to Mary: 'The life that I bide on this syde the sea is very troublesome, and is never sweetened by any delight, but only when I am writing to you; yet there is one thing more which would adde much to my happines, and that is . . . your writing to me. . . . I had one tricke which now I'll love. I was used never to write under 3 or 4 letters at a time, and when I had not time to write soe many then I was silent to all; but now

¹ Grooms and coachmen of the Hinton family have gone on at Claydon ever since, and a branch settled in Queensland sent two gallant young rough-riders to the Boer war in 1901.

. . because I shall be in a place whence newes will be often desired, sometimes one shall have it and sometimes another, and soe I hope to please all, which is a thing I much desire.'

At the request of his colonel he asked Ralph to get a motion made in the House that the arrears should be paid to the soldiers, but added, 'I believe it is a buisnes you care not to meddle with, and for my owne part I will not at all press you to it . . . I am now pretty well of my hurt in my shoulder. Here is none but lamentable news from Ireland, and I pray God send us suddenly over ass many more to follow us.'

Jan. 1642. At Christmas the troops are still wind-bound, but with the New Year he has got to Dublin, which was holding out against the rebels, though the whole country was in revolt, except a few of the fortified towns with English garrisons, and part of Connaught, where Lord Clanricarde maintained order to some extent.

Jan. 11, 1642. Edmund complains of the treatment of the army by the treasurer, who stopped sixpence in the pound out of their pay, for which he said he had a patent 'under the broad seale.' The matter was now referred to Parliament, and Edmund asks Ralph to help them. 'Had you sent 10,000 men 6 or 8 weekes since, I dare say the rebells had beene neare repelled by this, and now, for ought I know, it may last you many a yeare.' In February he wrote again of the distress in the army for want of money: 'he is held a rich man that can maintaine himself.' He asks for a tent (which was afterwards bought by Ralph for 7*l.*, and sent over to him) and an 'able pacing gelding.' Concerning an engagement at Swords, of which Ralph has heard, he says, 'I was

March 4, 1642. there myselfe, you were much misinform'd. . . . You mention 13 to be lost besydes Sir Lorenzoe Cary, the rebells to be treble our number, and alsoe intrenchd, whereas we lost but four in all, and were double the enemy; neither had any other intrenchment than a small work, more like a garden ditch than a trench; . . . I believe they lost 100 men. Ireland is full of castles, and truly

strong ones, and thither the rebbellis fly, not daring to give us a meeting, although treble our number. I will not say but that the want of armies and ammunition may be much the cause of it, but truly I doe believe them to be of a very cowardly nature. . . . I pray lett uss know when you intend to send uss money, or whither ye intend to send any. . . . I admire how you thinke wee live; wee have bellyes to feede and backs to cloath ass well ass you; wee want yet the hardynes to goe naked, neither have wee been bredd, lyke camelions, to live on ayre. There is scarce a captaine in the army but what to his souldyers and his owne necessary expenses he is 40/. worse then he is worth; and believe me, Brother, that which is worse then all this is, that the army cannot subsist without it; tis not here ass it was in Yorkshire; here the inhabitants are neither willing nor able to lend, and it is sport to them to see uss undone. Our souldiers have lived upon nothing this month but salt beefe and herrings, which is soe unusual to our men that came last out of England, that of our 2,500 men, I believe we have 500 sicke; then judge what will be the event if money come not speedily. I yet heare nothing of my doublet and cloake, and now is the time when I should have most use of it. One of my sisters has a stuffe sute, laced with black lace, which I made me in the north, and there is a taby sute which I never yet saw, though it hath beene made for me this 2 yeare. I pray let them be sent ass soone ass you can for summer comes on a pace.'

There was a proposal of paying the soldiers with land in Ireland, at the same time charging them a price for it, and Edmund protested against the unfairness 'of our paying double, I meane money and the hazard of our lives. . . . Wee, the last Monday stormed the castle of Carrigmaine and took it in, where the common souldyor (though the service were most deperate) expressed ass much courage and resolution ass could be expected from brave commanders, and why should not these men receive another kind of reward then thaire 8d. per diem?' He has got a couple of 'very good pilladge nagges,' so he no longer requires the gelding. The

March 29,
1642.

April 1,
1642.

army had neither rations nor pay. His cousin, Dick Turville, had taken a castle six miles from Dublin, where they found 300*l.* worth of corn, and 'Sr. Hennerly Tychburne march'd from Tredagh to dundalke, and tooke it.' Mun wants a troop of horse because 'the country is yet full, and tis the horse got all the pilladge.' The war in the Low Countries had set a frightful standard of severity. He writes from Trim of the taking of a castle which had held out three days. 'We had 20 men slaine and 30 hurt and 3 officers shot: after we put some four score men to the sword, but like valiant knights errant, gave quarter and liberty to all the women.'

June 22,
1642.

In July he had the command of Rathcoffy Castle, and had gained about 50*l.* by pillage, which paid the expenses of a fever when he was 'given over of the phisitions for a dead man for allmost a weeke.'

Aug. 24,
1642.

July 20,
1642.

Sept. 14,
1642.

Magdalen Bruce writes that 'Mun behavfe himself veri galantly and ganes much love,' but he calls it 'the most beggerly and lowsy service that ever Christian served in.' He had returned to Dublin, when the news reached him that Ralph had openly taken the side of Parliament, now in arms against the King. He was much distressed and wrote sternly: 'Brother, what I feared is proovd too true, which is your being against the king; give me leave to tell you in my opinion tis most unhandsonely done, and it greeves my hearte to thunke that my fathor allready and I, who soe dearly love and esteeme you, should be bound in con-scyence (because in duty to our king) to be your enemy. I heare tis a greate greife to my father. I beseech you consider that majesty is sacred; God sayth, "Touch not myne anointed"; it troubled Davyd that he cutt but the lapp of Saul's garment; I believe yee will all say yee intend not to hurt the king, but can any of yee warrant any one shott to say it shall not endanger his very person? I am soe much troubled to think of your being of the syde you are that I can write no more, only I shall pray for peace with all my hearte, but if God grant not that, yet that He will be pleased to turne your hearte that you may soe

expresse your duty to your king that my father may still have cause to rejoyce in you.'

The letter arrived in all the trouble of Sir Edmund's death and the general distress of the family. Ralph did not answer it, and Edmund became very uneasy lest his words should have bred discord between them. He wrote again several times, but received no answer. 'I helieve you have written too, and that it is only your heats one way and myne the other that have occasioned the miscarriage of our letters. I beseech you let not our unfortunate silence breede the least distrust of each other's affections, although I would willingly loose my right hand that you had gone the other way, yet I will never consent that this dispute shall make a quarrell between us, there be too many to fight with besides ourselves. I pray God grant a suddaine and a firme peace that we may safely meete in person ass well ass in affection. Though I am tooth and nayle for the king's cause, and shall endure soe to the death, whatsoever his fortune be, yet sweete brother let not this my opinion (for it is guyded by my conscience), nor any report which you can heare of me, cause a diffidence of my true love to you.'

Feb. 24,
1643.

Ralph wrote at last: 'Brother, I know not how saifly this letter may come to your hands, therefore I shall only tell you that in October I received your letter dated September 14, which was soe full of sharpnesse, that I rather chose to forbear answering it (being willing to avoyd all matters of dispute), then returne such a reply (as that language did deserve) to a brother I love soe well. I have now received another from you in another straine by Mr. Rogers, for which I thanke you, and let me entreate you to stick to the resolution you have taken concerning mee, and I shall promise to doe the like to you. I will send you noe newes (least it cause this letter to miscarry) but that Tom (though he lies still in the Fleet) is married and I feare most unhappily. Your truly affectionat Brother to serve you R. V.'

April 21,
1643.

Edmund was once fifteen months without tidings, although he had written Ralph six letters, and the anxiety

of not knowing the state of mind of those whom he loved so well was a great addition to his troubles. The difficulties arising from political animosities were naturally great; letters were opened and read, and only those sent by hand seem to have been safe. Edmund gives his brother an address at Dublin, saying, 'merchants' letters pass safely, when malignants' of either party are opened,' showing that this term was employed indifferently by both sides.

Feb 24,
1613.

Edmund took part in an engagement at Rathconnell and received a shot upon the collar of his doublet, 'which, however, only made my neck black and blewe, without any further hurt; the rebells have many officers come daily to them from Flanders and ours go by dozens into England, and I believe in a short time we shall none of us be able to stay here'; the soldiers had not been paid for months, and the country was so wasted round them, that they could get nothing to eat.

Feb. 24,
1613.

In April he says that he has not heard from Ralph for six or seven months; the times in Ireland grow worse and worse: 'About three weeks since the enemy gave my lord marquisse of Ormond [Lord Deputy] battell, where,' as he modestly says, 'I allsoe was. God gave us the victory; the rebells were more than two for one, yet we lost not above ten men, but there lay slayne of the enemy above 200, most of which were commanders and gentlemen of very good quality. Wee tooke Collonell Cullen leivetenant generall of theire army, serjeant major Butler and more captaines prisoners. About 3 dayes hence I shall goe out in another party with my Lord Moore. . . . I shall this day be serjeant major to Collonell Gybson's regiment, of which I have hitherto been captaine.'

April 10,
1613.

In September a cessation of arms was concluded for a year, but Edmund could not at once return to England. He writes from Dublin, 'Your distractions in England keepe uss soe poore in Ireland, that we scarce know how to put breade into our mouths.' He has had to take up 100% from the merchant in whose house he lies, for which he sends a

Oct. 24,
1613.

bill of exchange that he hopes Ralph will accept on the security of his 600*l.* or 700*l.* arrears of pay. 'I thinke there will be good store of our forces shortly in England; I shall be sure to be one, and though I come with ass mortall a dislyke to those you wish too well to, ass any man that shall come over, yet I pray be assured that I have ass much affection towards you ass any freinde you have.'

Unfortunately this letter only came to hand at the time when Ralph, in trouble with the Parliament, was about to take refuge in France. Nov. 1643. 'I am infinetly sorry poore Ireland hath tasted soe deeply of our distraction,' he replies, 'and that you have been soe greate a shairer in this common calamity. As for your coming over, you know my oppinion, and I have suffered too much already to trouble you with it any more, therefore I now only thanke you for those expressions of your love and affection, which you have given mee in this letter, and intreate you to heeleeve, that though perhaps in some things wee may differ in judgment and oppinion, yet nothing of that kinde shall ever prevaile with mee to breake that knot of true affection that ought to bee betwixt us, there are too many others to contend with; sweet Brother, let your breath and mine be spent in praiers for Peace, and though it bee denied us in this world, hereafter wee may finde it. God in mercy blesse you, farewell.'

This touching letter did not reach its destination, and in December Edmund, who had arrived at Oxford, wrote again in great distress at having no answer. He fears that Ralph's 'distance' proceeds from his former letter: 'For my part I have forgot the contents of it, and never desire to know it, since it bredd soe unhappy a difference. Beleeve me 'twas farr from my thought that it would ever take such effect, but the passion of it deriv'd its birth from ass passionate a one on the same occasion from him who can never be forgotten, or indeede remembered but with a sadd reverance. I am heartily glad to heare your resolution is altered, let the change of that be accompanyd with a new opinion of me. . . . I shall not subscribe my name to these lines, I am confident you know the hand, and if you knew the

Dec. 5,
1643.

heart ass well, much of what I have here written might have been left out. . . .'

Edmund felt the loss of his father most keenly; alluding to his will he says, 'Though I am left the best of the three [younger sons] yet it is but halfe of that which I have had a long promise of. Would it had pleased God to continue his lyfe that left it, though I had begged all myne. It is not that, nor anything else, that can lessen my honour to the memory of that most gallant man; let even the thought of being his children keep us all in unity.'

Jan. 10,
1643.

Tom meanwhile had 'proffered his service to his Majesty,' which had been accepted. In January '43 he writes from the Fleet to tell Sir Ralph how the troops he was with had been besieged in Chichester and forced to surrender upon quarter, 'But were all taken prisoners, and plundered of all except the cloths wee had then on our backs, which hath caused mee to be destitute of everything. For what I have hitherto done, I will maintaine with my life that it is warrantable . . . with this respect that I did allwayes maintaine that true protestant religion which my father bred and brought mee up in; next the king's prerogative, then the liberty of the subject, and last of all the just privileges of parliament. . . . Thus charitably will I think of you, that it is not your desire to have the book of common prayer taken out of the churches, but perhappys you would have it a little reformed.' He then begs for 10%. Tom is unapproachable when he poses as a philosopher and a divine; but it is to be feared that his letters were much less diverting to Sir Ralph than they are to us. He has found another cause for complaint: 'I was informed by a freind how scornefully I was spoken of, att the horne taverne in fleet street, by three or foure gentlemen that were in mourneing. The words were thees; that I was a great malignant and had deserved hanging. . . . More over they were pleased to applaud you, in saying that you were both wise and discreet and in much favour in the parliament hous; now one of thees being by made this answer; why you (being in soe great favour) did not seek my releasment

Jan. 16,
1643.

from my close imprisonment. Another of his associates did reply, that you took much distaste at a letter which I lately sent to you, therefore you would neither meddle nor make with mee.' He goes on to reproach Ralph furiously for making a brother 'a laughing stock and talk to every unworthy rascall.' Lady Sussex is 'truly sorry to hear ^{Jan. 30, 1643.} your naty brother gives so much trouble to you . . . i wish he were in the forefront of the next cernish . . . he gave much truble to his good father and so he will do to you i fear. You have don nothings of ill, but good to them all.' In April it appears that the ne'er-do-weel has taken to himself a wife. Lady Sussex concludes that 'Sartinly itt tis some mone pore woman . . . let him suffer for his folly and goo his one waye.' Ralph had been trying to arrange for his release from the Fleet upon conditions of his straightway taking ship in charge of the master. 'The Barbados is the place that I only ayme att. But your weak faith doth not ^{May 14, 1643.} any wayes beleve that my thoughts are reall . . . Oh! Brother how doe you wish my libertye, and tye mee to see hard conditions. My conscience telleth mee that neither his lordshipp nor the hous of commons never thought to take mee out of one prison to putt mee into another, I meane in giveing mee in charge to a maister of a shipp, had not you putt it into their minds, haveing an itching desire to have mee gone; for feare I should be chargeable to you hereafter; which is contrary to my disposition.'

It is but too evident that he has no intention of relieving his relations in England of his presence; his wife Joyce writes to Ralph begging his help, since the Parliament claimed her goods, and her husband had betaken himself to the King's army. Ralph does not hold out much hope of his assistance, remarking gravely, 'had I had any knowledg of ^{July 1, 1643} your intentions to match with him, both this and that might have been prevented.'

It does not appear that Mistress Tom Verney would have welcomed this well-meant interference, and Lady Sussex's surmise that she must be some poor mean woman seems to have been a piece of gratuitous ill-nature, prompted by her

heartly dislike of Tom. Joyce, who writes and spells better than most of the ladies of Ralph's acquaintance, expresses her 'passionate affection to your brother my deare husband. I have parted with an estate and my father is ready to do much more for me, so that my husbaud performs with him the conditions upon marriage with me . . . I am sorry my husband did not folow your counsell being his wisest frind. But I had rather condeme my selfe then my husband, and I would suffer any thing for him, as I am bound in duty . . . my best hopes was to enjoy his desired company.'

Jan. 20,
1643.

Henry's fortunes are somewhat obscure. Lady Sussex writes of some expectations of his that were disappointed. 'Now let meo tell you i am infinety sory that your good brother hath misede of the plas; the unworthynes of pepell in thes times are beyonde all exampell i thinke; if itt bee more mony that must do itt, i will helpe somethinge to itt. May bee itt was ill taken that they went not to do ther duty att Oxfort: you are wise and discrute; yonger brothers that are to make ther fortunes, must sometimes be forst to doo that which is not plesinge to them.' A little later Henry is in the Royalist army, so three of the Standard-bearer's sons were fighting for the King.

Feb. 1644.

The money which Sir Edmund intended to leave to his younger children had melted away in the King's service and in the depreciation of all securities and investments, but Edmund did not understand the difficulties of Ralph's position, and he takes rather a high tone respecting his sisters' fortunes: 'I am confident you are of opinion that if my father when he made his will had had the least thought of these times, he would not have left his younger children theire portions in such an office [the Aulnage]—his intentions were they should have it the full, and wass heartily troubled he could make it no more. Sweete Brother mistake me not, I doe not write this that I thought it reasonable all this losse should lyght on you, but that you having by many degreese the greater share, so in æquity should beare the greatest burden of it; I and my other two brothers have our swords to live by, though God knowes they yeeld us but poor livelyhoods in

these times, yet while I have it and God blesse my lymbs and grant that I am not taken prisoner, I shall endeavour hereafter to keepe lyfe and soule togeather ass well ass I can by it. But for my sisters I must desire you to continue your allowance to them ass long and in ass high a proportion ass you are able, God knowes they are not able to helpe themselves. I am confident it was ever your intention.'

He had previously demanded his own allowance somewhat peremptorily: not realising that Sir Ralph had already honoured bills he had sent from Ireland out of his own pocket, as neither Edmund's pay nor his claims on the Aulnage had been paid; he had even forced the steward at Claydon to give him 80*l.* in the mistakon belief that Ralph was answerable for his fortune, and a coolness between the brothers ensued. Mary naturally felt indignant for her husband, and Edmund writes humbly to her: 'Sweete Sister it iss now about a yeare and halfe since I receiv'd a letter from you: I have written severall since that time; I remember when you would not have receiv'd soe many without making returne; I put it to yourselfe to judge of whither thinke you these fitt times for those whoine allyaunce tyes to soe strict a unity, to live in any distance; but heretofore I thought allyaunce the lesser tye that had beene betweene uss and that of freindshipp the greater, and can this be dissolv'd at once? and without any expostulation? it held 10 yeare firme, and can any one houres worke destroy soe strong a foundation and wholly ruine it? Lyfe iss at all times most uncertaine, but I am now in a way that I know not how soone mine may be shortned by accident, and would you willingly entertaine this dispute during lyfe? Sweete Sister beleve it hath lasted long enough, yea too too long, and therefore now let it dy.'

In the meantime a long-delayed letter from Mun reached Ralph in France, which he said was 'the greatest comfort and contentment' he had had since leaving 'poore England.' Harmony was thus happily restored, and the affectionate intimacy between the brothers was only interrupted by Edmund's premature and tragic death.

This question of the fortunes of the younger children from the Aulnage is constantly coming up. Cary Gardiner had some settlements on her marriage, and Margaret was provided for by her godmother, Mrs. Eure; but Susanna, Penelope, Mary, and Elizabeth were advised to petition 'the honorable Committee of the King's Revenue' for their annuities and arrears. Their petition was considered by a Committee of Lords and Commons in September 1647, and was referred to the Solicitor-General for his report by an order signed by Lords Salisbury, Saye and Sele, and Wharton, Henry Mildmay and J. Bond. Oliver St. John made a detailed report in which he established Sir Edmund Verney's claim under the Great Seal of England to this charge 'upon the Aulnage . . . and duties payable upon all and all manner of Woolen Cloathes and Stuffs of the old and new draperies made to be sould in the Realme of England, Dominion of Wales and the Isle of Weight.'

But although the Verney girls had proved their rights, they were very far from getting their money. Year after year their eldest brother helps them to assert their claims; he begs the Dentons to 'haunt Lord Wharton about the Aulnage.' There are complaints that certain papers are lost, and hints that officials concerned in it expect fees. 'Hungry curs will eat durty puddings,' says Dr. Denton. Their neighbours, the Chaloners, offer to help, but 'the Aulnage sticks in Chaloners' hands'; then the matter is referred to Sir Henry Mildmay. In 1649 it is still in
 Sept. 1649. suspense; 'Dr. thinks unlesse the whole Aulnage fall it will be gott at last,' but if all friends fail 'Dr. will give somebody 100*l.* to get it donne.' . . . 'A Fee to some powerfull man were well given to get this money.'

Dr. Denton goes on consulting 'with all persons about the Aulnage, everybody discomforts him, but hee will offer at it still and watch for an opportunity to advance it.' In 1655, thirteen years after their father's death, the girls are still vainly trying to get their portions; their brother Edmund having long passed beyond the reach of the changes and chances of this troublesome world.

CHAPTER XXI.

SIR RALPH'S CHOICE, THE COVENANT OR EXILE.

1643.

At the beginning of 1643, Ralph, though he is too troubled to take notes, is attending Parliament and carrying on his correspondence with Lady Sussex.

She has a trying life at Gorhambury, what with the danger of being attacked and plundered, the difficulty of getting rents, and the annoyances from soldiers quartered in the neighbourhood. She mentions how 'my lady Monmouth sent hur horses yesterday to fech up hur children, and the ware taken away from hur servant.' She gets a protection for Gorhambury signed by Lord Essex, and she is taking her own measures to defend herself from the lawlessness of Royalist soldiers. Oct. 25,
1642.

'my fear is most of prince ropperte, for the say he hath littill mercy when he comes. . . . I am hear in as sade a condisyon as may bee. . . . i have made up some of the dors and pilede them up so with wode that i belive my hose is able to keepe out a good many now; if wee escape plonderinge i shall account it a great marsy of god; the are all about us hear in such grivus fears that if they see but a gentillman ridinge they think it tis to robe them.' Nov. 7,
1642.

In January '43 she writes: 'They till me ther was something rede in the chorch this sonday, that thos that dide not give to the parlyment must be plonderede presently. i cannot belive it was so; but your forses have taken away our sriffe [sheriff] as the call him; i pray god drect the harts of the most powerfull to put an ende to the miserable time which must nedes ruen all if they holde.' 'i thanke Jan. 14,
1643.

Jan. 20,
1643.

you for my printide nues, but i belive as you dide the lordes never made the speches. . . . Sometimes when ther is any true thinges put in printe, i shoulde bee glade of them ; but not of all the idel thinges they make.' 'Great somes i see must be rasede.' She desires that her pictures may not be sent, as they are safer with Sir Ralph. 'i hear your parlyment commandes ther shall bee no passege betwixt Oxfort and London, if itt be so i shall bee in great distres for my chaplen, who apoynts to com up the next wike and to have his bokes brought up which is all his welth. . . . in honor i most make good the bokes if the shoulde miscary.' 'This retierde life with my sade thoughts truly woulde sone make an ende of me, had i not more from you than the rest of my frindes to plesse me ; thes times give us lettill but terror and fears, and we hear ther is littell hopes of an acomidasyon.'

Jan. 28,
1643.

Jan. 29,
1643.

There is a letter from Saxham of Sir Henry Crofts' to his sister-in-law, Lady Sussex, in which he describes 'the miseries and distractions of the generall condition of these times and this kingdome. . . . We have been hetherto in this countye more happye then many other partes, . . . but now we have but too much cause to feare our turnes in sufferinge equally with the rest is neare at hand.' In these circumstances his daughter Hester will prove an 'extraordinary troble' and 'greate affliction,' and he begs that Lady Sussex will receive her 'untill this tirrany maye through God's mercy be over past. . . . I hope God will in his mercy direct me to some place of retreate, whereby I maye avoide the haveinge that tendred to me which I am resolved and am bound in conscience never to subscribe unto [the Covenant].'

Feb. 10,
1643.

Lady Sussex writes : 'The last wike one of the tone [St. Albans] sent us worde they did intende to com and plonder us that night ; but a thinke God it was not so ; i sente presently to ther captins, so they have promisede to have a care of us, and to keepe ther sogers from us : S^r tomis Chike sent us another protexsyon, so that I hope wee shall bee safe . . . i pray God your hose consent for a sasyon of armes.' 'i must expect littill or noe rent this our lady-

Feb 16,
1643.

day . . . Bosby was one that pade beste, and truly the parlyment side hath usede him very hardly; for his religion i thinke; the have kailled all his kattill uppon the gronde, taken away his hay, so that itt tis likely he most paye ill now.' 'My lorde Gray hath bene at Senttabornes about the assosasyon [for the defence of the Eastern Counties]: I hear very fue gentimen of the contrye cam in to him, but resonable store of the contry pepell cam in; he made a great spech, but I coulde not hear what it was; he put non to the othes; but they say he gave them thure wikes time to consider of it, and he menes to site they say in some other tones in this contry; they have ratede this parish as i hear att fore ponde a leven sillings a wike, and to keepe 8 fote sogers.' She is urged to leave Gorhambury 'but truly as i have stade by it hetherto, so i mene an ples God to continue itt out still, for if this war continue i thinke most plases will bee a like.'

March 17,
1643.

March 22,
1643

Ralph was leaving Covent Garden, and Lady Sussex's next letter is addressed 'for Sr Rafe VERNY att his hose in Lincolnes Inn feilds in the midle of the Row wher the Spanish Embassidor lies.' 'My brother tom tells me it tis a prity fine hose, and i am suer you will make itt convenient and handsome. Ther will bee so much dost in settinge thinges up and with workmen, that mythinkes you and your good swite lady shoulde bee content to leve itt; it will bee my infinet joy when some ever you ples to com, and your chamber i can have without truble to anybody. I shall ever take that fridom to youse you as my one childe, without any cerimony. We have great store of sogers now att Sene tabornes, but wee see non of them. I pray God keepe them still from us for thes bee the rudist I have harde of; they saw them tare the common prayer.'

March 30,
1643.

Early in April she again thanks him 'for his nuse, wee being not all hear of one belife i tell them no more then what i thinke fit for them to know . . . i harde from Oxfort latly and much faxsyon ther is, and some wickede pepell about the kainge doth labore whatt they can that wee may have no pese; and indede it tis thought by some that knows much of

April 7,
1643.

April 10,
1643.

the affairs ther, that they will bee shortly removede on way or other.'

April 14,
1648

After Ralph had been to see her she thanks him for his 'kainde fisites,' and hopes he has not suffered 'by so ill a ihorny . . . My baly cam out of esexe that day you was hear, but brought not a peny of mony ; ther is a great taxes lade uppon the landes, so hee cam to let mee know the tenents woulde not pay itt, but that i most alowe of itt ; so i tolde him i woulde, but that itt shoulde goo in the tenents name . . . i hope no plonderers have bene att Cladon . . .

April 17,
1648.

My lorde Gray lay att Sene taborns fridy nighte with some thre thosonde . . . i got my brother Crofts to goo to him with a compliment, so he hath promisede to do us all the cortisy hee can in his care of us hear.' Ralph's hangings and carpets are to be sent up to him. She hears that tenants in Buckinghamshire are refusing to stock their lands, except on the condition that in case the cattle are driven off, the landlord should deduct their loss from the rent.

May 9,
1648.

Aunt Isham had lent 1,000*l.* to Sir Edmund when the King exacted contributions for the war. She now wrote to Ralph about the interest for the money. He had offered to settle land in any way she pleased, but she will leave all choice to him, of whose honesty, ability, and care she is very confident, but he may take counsel with her brother, Dr. Denton, 'to avoyde suspicion of other and clamour of the world . . .' Formerly the interest had been 8 per cent., but in these bad times she says that would not be possible for him to pay, 'and it would be a sin in me to receve it though you should freely offer it.' She is fain to entertain soldiers 'twise a day and keepe them company all the while for feare they should not think us courteous.' 'For the passengers that pass aboute ther bisnes, they lay hold on them.' There had been depredations at Claydon : 'to drag your ponde was a wikedde part of them to do ; but i hope the hade not time to destroy all your good fish.'

June 23,
1648.

Lady Sussex writes : 'i am very sory for mnr hamdon ; I do not know him att all, but I have harde he is a most discrute good man, i beceeh god he may recover . . . If all

bee true that is reportede . . . the parlyment side hath hade much the worst of itt latly . . . the say hear that farfex hath hade a great ovour thro, and waller will never bee able to appere agane.' Again, 'the death of mr hamden was a most infinet lose beinge so religious and very wise a man.' June 30,
1643.

The loss of Hull was but just averted by timely measures. 'Sr hothom is a most unworthy man if it bee true that is thought of him; but sartinly he knowes himselfe guilty of some ill bisynes, or eles he woulde not have indevouorde to make an escape; i thought his sone hade bene fast in nottingam castill.' July 5,
1643.

Later Lady Sussex bewails the defeat at Adwalton Moor: 'I am truly sorry for my lorde farfex, a brave man he is; i hope god will keepe him from falinge into the handes of his enimies. ther plots are still discoverde; the say in thes parts, ther was a publicke fast and thinkesgiveinge att oxfor for this blow my lorde farfex hath hade; but i belive rather itt was bonfiers.' Two days later she says: 'Sr edwarde terell was a little fearfull; prince robort hade bene hontinge att his parke [Thornton, near Buckingham] he toke him much with his cortisy to him; he kailde fife buckes, shote them and his doge boy poulede them down, he dide not ride att all. . . . Prince robort made a shorter stay then he intendede, hearinge my lord csex entendede to bee att bucingam, all his compiny went away suddently and he and them all laye in the filde that night. My lord of csex army went thoro some of the pasteurs, dide littill hort; the most was in Blackegrofe, for ther many of them laye uppon the gras and restede themselves; the toke not above on shipe [sheep]; in the common filde wher the laye all night ther was many shipe gon.' 'The are very mery att oxfort i hear, and thinke to ovour com all suddonly; i hope the will not finde itt so esye a mattir as the thinke.' July
1643.

Doll Leeke writes an earnest appeal to Ralph. 'I cannot chuse but let you know my opinion of your condision, which I think is so ill that it wear want of frindship in me to conceall it. You have bin all this year thought a violent man against the king and the taking of the Oath has con-' Aug. 10,
1643.

fermed it; he sayes himself that all that took it wold be glad of his ruen, and it is the opinion of most that are about him. God has blesed him beyond all your expections, and he is now in so good a condision that he need not fear the parliment, tho they have gon all the wais in the world to destroy him: thay have nether wanted men mounney nor tonnes tell now, but you se how thay have prospered. I beleve the maine party of them have will provided for themselves, and will leve you and many more in the lurch, therefore consider with your self how you may come off and defere it not, it will not be so easy a thing as you may Imagin, and do not think that the lose of your father will be any heelp to you, for that has gained you many enemies hear. From ther love to him proseads ther hate to you, becaus you have continued with thos that killed him, this is the speach of many and I confess gos something near me to hear it. Besids the lose of your fortune you must not look for any thing from any that are with the king but disrespect, the family that I am in excepted who ever will be your faithfull frinds, tho it may not be in ther power to serve you as thay desire. Whatsoever your consienc has binn heartofore, I now beleve you see your erour, for it is imposible that you can still continue in so much blindnes. God has given you to lardg a proporsion of sene. Loke upon the king from the begining, and think with your self if god's blising had not gon with him, whether it had bin posible he could have binn in such a condision, as he is now in. I know many that wold be glad to make ther peas and give good somes for it (and such parcons as you wold not beleve wold leave you) and will not be accepted of. . . . I heard my lord wainman and some other which I will not name are upon coming away, you wear mentshoned a mongst them, I wish that part of the story wear true.' She recommends him to 'come with a good many for the number may nake you all considerable to the king, which any of you alone wold not be. Cosen, if you cannot find in your hart to do this, leve them and retire to some other plac, I meane the parliment, for assure your self thay will leave you and the kingdom in a very short time.

Consider your wiffe and children and brothers and sisters, which must all sufer with you. . . . My obligasions are so greate that it wear ingratitude in me not to discharge my consiense, which I now have don. Your brothers are both well; Tom found forty pound in an ould coberd in the subburbs of Bristow befor we got the towne but I think it will not do him much good.' Bristol was taken by Rupert in July.

In August came the 'Solemn League and Covenant' drawn up between the English and Scots for their mutual defence and for the establisment of the Presbyterian system; it was sworn to at Westminster by 112 members of the Commons, and became 'a sword to divide.' Sir Ralph's refusal to sign the Covenant proved the turning point of his career; his conscience would no longer permit him to continue with a party he had loved and served so well. He left London for Gorhambury. His most intimate friend, Sir Roger Burgoyne, signs the Covenant, and while respecting his scruples, never ceases to hope that Sir Ralph may yet 'come in.' He writes topsy-turvy Aug. 20,
1643. in sympathetic ink, between the lines of a letter ostensibly full of public news, urging him to return, for 'there was an order made this morning for the sequestring the estates of those members of the house as shall absent themselves without leave.' 'As you left us, so you may finde us, Sept. 5,
1643. speaking much, doing little. There is little newes stirring and that is so weary before it comes to the Hall that it seldom can mount so high as the House.'

Other friends are trying to stand up for Sir Ralph in his absence and to gain time for him to consider his decision. Mr. W. Bell writes: 'I bid them take notice from me that Sept. 14,
1643. you were noe delinquent.' Later: 'A motion was made against you to-day for absenting yourselfe, as if you were gone to the king; Mr. Speaker, Mr. Rennolds, and I told them how the case stood with you, where upon the whole House was very well satisfied with it.'

Deeply hurt that his conduct should be so misconstrued, Sir Ralph wrote to Mr. Robert Reynolds: 'S^r,—Your former

favours give mee confidence to trouble you with a letter to excuse my not waiting on you as I intended. The truth is, I am yet soe much unsatisfied in that businesse, that though I have greate desire to comply with you, and some other of my freinds, and submit myselfe to your better judgments, yet for y^e present I cannot doe it, and being unwilling to give the House the least offence (knowing how uselesse a creature I am), I have resolved to take a jorney and for a while to retire to some such place, where I may have leisure enough to informe my judgment in such things wherein I am yet doubtinge. S^r, perhappes this my absence may give occation to some jellous spirits to suggest (as formerly they have donn) that I am gonn to Oxford, I confesse I care not what such men say, a little time will sufficiently discover those malicious untruths and shame there authours what ever reports are raised, or however I may suffer by them, I shall alwaies honour, and pray for the Parliament.'

Sept. 23,
1643.

Sir Roger tells him that the House has resolved that the Covenant shall be taken 'by all the members of that house, and all the ministers of the Assembly in St. Margaret's Church in Westminster upon Munday next. Old Mr. White to begin the day in confession, Mr. Nic (whome we sent into Scotland) for to succeed him in exortation and advise, Dr. Goodge to conclude as he shall please.'

Sept. 25,
1643.

A later letter describes how this was carried out. Mr. Nye having made his exhortation, 'Mr. Henderson immediately after made a thing betweene a speech and a preach to us in his seate; after which Mr. Nic reade the Covenant in the pulpit before us all, which was ingrossed in parchment, then afterwards the house of Co^mons went up into the Chancel for to subscribe theire names to it; after them the Scotch Commissioners and the Assembly. One thing I must misplace, which is that after the Covenant was read, all that would take it were to hold up their handes. Ther was a greater appearance both of the house of Co^mons, and also of the Assembly then was expected. The names of those that tooke it are not yet knowne, nor of those that have not. My L^d Grey of Ruthin, and Mr. Bond of o^r House are by

the House ordered to be the notaries for to observe all that come into the house which have not taken the Covenant. . . . Next Wednesday all ministers in London and the suburbs are to explain the Covenant to their parish by order from the House, and upon Sunday next they are all to take it.'

The plot was thickening; members were compelled to sign the Covenant with short days of grace; men dared scarcely speak or write. 'These inquisitive times silence all our pennes.' Sir Roger writes 'S',—I attended the house upon Tuesday, there came in but three which had not taken the Covenant the day before, S^r Harry Vane, M^r. Solliciter, S^r J^o. ffranklin. The two first are ready for to take it when the house shall please, the other desires time to consider of it. . . . Sir Walter Erle reports that some of our forces swallowed out of Poole and took diverse of the king's forces, amongst which Coll [Henry] Varney was one. . . .'
Sept. 28,
1643.

Again Sir Roger writes: 'Sir W. Lewis tells me that he will take it. He wonders at you for holding off so much, I preethee deare heart this day or too morrow at the farthest come to thine owne.'
Oct 17,
1643.

The stress of the times had turned 'Brother Doll' into a politician, and the Verney girls, without any regard for the principle at stake, are anxious to warn their brother of the risk he is running; Susan writes of a report that those that 'give Intelygence' against members absent from the House 'shall have the selling of them and their profit twelf pence in the pound: where of I heare though S^r Alex. Denton and Sir Ralph Varney though the be nott named, yett they say as the know well enough wheare they be, and if they doe nott com, they shall be fetchet very suddenly and putt in prison. There are none counted so great malignents as they be. In hast yours.' (No signature.)
Oct. 17,
1643.

It is clear that Ralph had now made up his mind not to sign. His uncomplaining heroism is very remarkable. The new 'pretty house' in Lincoln's Inn Fields; the ordering of his and his wife's estates, which he did so well and enjoyed doing; the county business in which he took so large a share; and his strong parliamentary interests, were all to be

abandoned. He never alludes to any of the sacrifices he is making; they seem to him quite simple, he must do what he thinks right, and nothing outside has the slightest effect upon his resolution. His trusted friend Sir Roger writes that Sir John this and Sir William that have 'come in,' that 'Sir Norton Snatchpoole,' Mr. James Fiennes, &c., with whom Ralph has been working side by side in the contest for the rights of Parliament, have had a day or two more grace allowed them, that 'Sir Harry Vane and Mr. Soliciter' have given up the contest and signed their names. It does not make the least impression upon him. What is it to him how other men's consciences allow them to act? The question is, What I, Ralph Verney, believe to be the righteous course in the matter, and that, so help me God, I will take.

'My friends consider that my over scrupulous conscience taketh the oath for a great perilous thing, when it is indeed but a trifle,' said another Englishman who had dared to stand alone in a former crisis of England's history, 'and many may think this whom I myself esteem for their learning and virtue. . . . But whether they do or not, does not make any difference to me. . . . I never intend to pin my soul to another man's back. . . . I have counted the possible peril on full many a restless night with a heavy heart, but never thought to change.' Sir Ralph had not the buoyant cheerfulness that carried Sir Thomas More so triumphantly through all sorrows; he was in the deepest depression of spirits; indeed, he had so little of the stuff in him whereof martyrs are made, that it is touching to see a man so cautious, so careful, so fond of the proprieties and even of the punctilios of life, go forth calmly into what to him was indeed the wilderness.

Accustomed to being greatly regarded at home, he went out to face penury and insignificance; and what, to a man who enjoyed doing every item of his own business with his own head and hands, must have been almost worse, he was obliged to leave his affairs to others. The delays and uncertainties of the foreign post, and the un-

settled state of the country, made it difficult for him when abroad even to hear of what his steward was doing—but 'the bigots of the iron time' had affixed a penalty of utter ruin on any independence of judgment. The wrench is great; it is like the dividing asunder of soul and body; he has only to walk up St. Margaret's, to sign his name in the chancel: but there is never a halt in his resolution. 'For my owne part I am resolved,' he says, 'that innocency shall be my guard, and then whatsoever I suffer I can beare without repining.' Mr. John Fountaine, a Royalist lawyer, writes to him: 'I was once Oct. 1,
1643. in hopes since I last parted with thee, that something might have been done to have caused a happy and peaceable meeting, but all those hopes were soone quashed, and I see nothing now but y^e devouring sworde to put an end to o^r differences. I understand something of thy intentions. I wish I might be soe happy that . . . I may speake wth thee before thy departure.' Ralph replies: 'My hart, it grieves mee that I cannot invent a way to see thee . . . and it afflicts mee much more to think how longe wee shall bee parted. Had I thy company all places wou^{ld} bee pleasant to mee, but wherever I am, I will bee entirely thine; and if wee never mee^te on earth, I hope in heaven wee shall. God in mercy end these miserable times, for my part I never expect to enjoy any more, I see my ruine at the very doore ready to swallow mee.'

Sir Roger writes about 'Colonel Varney's' imprisonment, and about some trunks belonging to Ralph's sister Oct. 3,
1643. Mary, which had been intercepted and examined by the Committee at Harford. 'Sir John Norwich . . . cannot believe that any thing ther did belonge to Mistress Mary Verney, unless it were a little booke Quarles Emblems uppon which her name was writt.' Poor Ralph, in the midst of his own distresses, writes to Colonel Whitehead at Portsmouth in Henry's behalf, saying that he will supply his brother's wants as soon as possible. 'In the meantime I know you are soe noble, that he shall have all necessary accommodations fit for a gentleman.' To Henry him-

self [who had written to beg 20*l.*, for 'all the goods thay left mee was a come and a nolmenecke'] he says that he has used all the means he could to effect his desires. 'I know restraint is greivous to your nature, yet you were happie to fall into soe good hands.'

From the letter of a certain Thomas Baker, it appears that there was no doubt about getting an exchange for Henry, but the fame of his gallantry made them think an important one necessary. In the following January 'Harry is newly released his prison, but it cost him 60*l.* ransome,' and he is shortly after serving again.

During the summer Sir Ralph's household had been constantly on the *qui vive* for soldiers; the trained bands marching from London to the battle of Newbury passed through Bucks, and the account given by one of the sergeants has been published in the 'History of the Honourable Artillery Company.' 'August 30.—We advanced to a village called Clayden, this day the Lord General's Army and our Regiment of the Trained Band together with the auxiliary forces met at Aylesbury; the great guns were fired at every fort about the town as the Lord General passed by. This was the last day; our Regiment was quartered this night at Sir Ralph Verney's House, a Parliament man, his father, the King's Standard-bearer, was slain at Edgehill.'

Susan Verney and Sir John Lecke write doleful letters describing how the horses were carried off by the troopers; we 'sloed [showed] them noates under your hand, but they would nott looke upon them. Then we asked them for their commishtion but they would shoe none,' says Susan, and her uncle mourns over the loss of his bay gelding and a beloved old horse Ormond, as 'more grevios than my Irish plunders, for now the owld man must trampe on foote.'

Meanwhile, in his methodical way, Sir Ralph was making such arrangements as were possible for the comfort of his wife and family. Before the Navigation Acts, the carrying trade was mainly in the hands of the Dutch, so that travellers going from England to France sent their goods by Holland,

even if they went themselves by the direct route. All through September and October, Sir Ralph is settling about the transport of his heavy luggage. He has been warned to keep his secret and to caution his servants not to spread any rumour of his intended departure; but many 'bundles' are coming up from Claydon by degrees. He was evidently preparing for a long absence. The 'bundles' go through sad adventures. A certain Dixon was to convey some of them to Rotterdam. Dr. Peter Chamberlain writes from thence to say that Dixon has arrived, but without Sir Ralph's goods or his own, 'like a spider he hath turned the sweetness of your favours into poison . . . we have fallen into the hands of Turkes, the seamen we had to deale withall are most exquisite knaves. . . . Noble Sir, wee are here in a strange country all naked, till your freindshipp & wisdome helpe us out of these troubles.'

Other things are despatched to Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and later on Will Roades sends up 'an inventory of 17 bundles of linen, pikturs and stores, whereof 10 of them are sent to London, and the last seaven are to com up this present 17th Novemb. 1643.'

The luggage sent on amounted to fifty-one 'percells,' including some trunks of valuables which relations had confided to his good nature. Other property was hidden away in London; but troublesome as these arrangements must have been, they were as nothing to the complicated business to be settled at Claydon.

A protection from the King and one from the Parliament had been obtained for Claydon House to defend it, if possible, from either army. Sequestration was imminent, and to ward it off all sorts of legal fictions were resorted to. The estate was vested in trustees, and fictitious leases to friends were drawn up to protect Sir Ralph's London house, and his interest in the Aulnage.

There were the five sisters to be provided for, whose names read like the chorus of an old song. There were Sue and Pen and Peg and Molly, and unruly little Betty, who was only ten years old. Except Susan, who was boarded with the

Leekes, they were all to remain at Claydon under the care of Mrs. Alcock, with occasional visits from their brothers, and from their uncles and aunts at Hillesden, which was sheltering a large party of Dentons and Ishams. They were dependent on their eldest brother not only for protection, but for bare subsistence.

Susan, the eldest, was now twenty-two. She was in delicate health, and was in London for advice. ' . . . I am extremely yeallow, my Aunt Leeke did think it might prove the janders.' Dr. Crag tells her that 'itt proseedes all from mallincolly.' 'I did thinke as I should never abinne sick with that!' Poor and proud, the girls were quarrelling amongst themselves. 'I did spake to Pegge,' writes Mrs. Isham, 'as her mayd might sarve both her & Pen, but she will not let it be so by no meanes. . . . I told her now their ffather and mother was dead, they should be a helper one to the other . . . but all would not doe. If she will be content to take my godchilde [Betty] holy to her, all but wassing of her, then Nan Fudd [the nurse] will have more time to help Pen, & you need not be att any more charges for a mayd for Pen.' Pen is to pay 8s. a week for her diet out of her allowance, which she inclines to think too much. She is also to find clothes for the maid Bess Coleman. It is a curious bit of human nature that these poor girls, fatherless, motherless, and penniless, cannot forbear standing out for the services to which each considers she has a right from the maids. 'I am to intreat a favour,' Pen writes, 'which is if you can lett Nann fud have soe much time as to come [comb] my head, for I doe heare that bess colman cannot doe it, and if I have not won which can come a hed will, I doe not know what to doe by reason that my hed is soe tender, and to smoth sum of my uppar lining, by reason that bess colman cannot doe them, but I hope in time to bring hur to it. My sister Margearett will teake my sister betty to hur, and hur made shall dres hur and heare hur hur booke and teach hur work.'

Ralph and Mary had now three children living. Edmund, who had been made so much of by Lady Denton and Lady

Sussex, had grown past the halcyon days of blue satin-coats and nursery petting into a fine tall boy of nearly seven ; Margaret, who had taken the place of her dead sisters in her parents' hearts, was a year younger. There are many allusions in the letters to her beauty and the sweetness of her character from witnesses less partial than her devoted father and mother ; it was settled that Mun and Peg were to go with them abroad. The fate of the little three-year-old John was for some time undecided ; his nurse, Nan Fudd, and all his maiden aunts were ' loth to part with Jack's good company ' ; he was a sturdy little fellow, and his presence was very welcome in the desolate house. The aunts carried the day, and it was four years before Mary saw her ' sossy ' boy again.

Lady Sussex undertook to look to the sale of the horses after their departure. Sir Roger Burgoyne was a man of that rare kind who, when his advice is refused, will set about to help his friends in their own way. He had thought Sir Ralph utterly mistaken in refusing to sign the Covenant, but, when his counsel was rejected, he did his best to help him to find a foreign resting-place.

Meanwhile matters in Parliament were growing more and more serious. Sir Roger wrote of ' three members that refused to take the covenant yeisterday, for which they are only suspended from the Howse during the pleasure of the howse, and untill such time as a punishment be agreed uppon by the howse for to be inflicted uppon the refusers of it.' Again : ' We heare nothing concerning the three gentlemen . . . the punishment is not yet brought forth, but the Com^{tee} is now in travaile ; I wish it prove not a monster.' Mr. Pierpoint was refused an interval to consider the question.

Nov. 7,
1643.

Nov. 9,
1643

Nothing remained for Sir Ralph but to be gone with all speed if he was to retain his personal freedom.

Having apparently wound up his business, private and political, he sits down in utter grief and weariness, and draws up, *more suo*, two melancholy papers, docketed in his usual tidy fashion, as expressing his wishes—' If I miscarry,'

to be left with Sir Roger, about the disposal of his goods, the payment of his debts, and a provision for little Jack at Claydon.

Nov. 1643. This done, he made a rough draft of a letter to Lady Sussex, in which he took a ceremonious leave of her, 'for I am now hastinge to the shipp, w^{ch} perhappes may bee my grave.' Alas! there was no need to hurry. There were still many tedious weeks to be got over, spent chiefly, it appears, under Lady Sussex's hospitable roof at Gorhambury, to which loving farewell letters are addressed by different members of the family. 'Nattycock and Nannycok' (the playful names of happy Claydon days for Sir Nathaniel and Anne Lady Hobart) send 10,000 loves. His aunt, Mrs. Isham—a King's woman to the core—who quarrelled with his going from the opposite point of view to Sir Roger Burgoyne's, writes that she cannot hear of some clothes sent to Claydon for the children:

Dec. 3,
1643. 'Now the armies is aboute, and Mr. J. [Isham] and I could wishe you thire too, thinkeing it the rites cause, and in time I hope youre mind will change, if it be in the ronge, or else not, and in the mene while my pray shall be as god would gide us to take his side which ever it be, and so a due wisshing you as well as mine one soule.'

Nov. 30,
1643. There is a little brown scrap of paper at Claydon labelled 'a Pass for Sir Ralph Verney with his lady, etc., when they retired into France under the names of Smith'—a time-honoured *alias*, which did good service with all refugees, and in later days sheltered Louis Philippe on his flight to England. The pass is addressed 'To all Capitaines and others whom it concernes.' 'London. These are to require you to permitt and suffer Mr. Ralph Smith and his wyfe and his man and mayde to passe by water to Lee in Essex and to returne. So they carry nothings of Danger. By warrant of ye L^d Maier, Jo: Beadnege.'

The tempestuous wintry weather added indefinitely to the sufferings and hazards of the journey. Two or three weeks seem to have been spent in vain attempts to get across to France. 'My very cloathes were on Board,' writes

Sir Ralph, 'and I myself lay privately in a close corner ready to bee gon.' The weather is so bad that their late kind hostess listens anxiously to the wind howling among the trees at Gorhambury, and thinks of them tossing about in the Channel. The terrible voyage over at last, Sir Ralph wrote to her on the last day of the year, 1643, from Rotterdam: 'This letter hath noe other errand then to acquaint your Ladyshipp that from the first of this month till Friday last, wee lay winde bound, in ^{Dec. 21,} ^{1643.} ⁻ weh time I spent all my little stock of patience, and then seeing noe hopes of better weather, a shipp or two being ready for Holland, I resolved to come heather. Wee had a most tempestuous and violent winde for 12 houres, but through God's greate mercy on Sunday night wee all arrived heere in saifty. I humbly thank your Ladyshipp for your Furre, certainly you did fore see or prophicie my coming into this cold country. My stay heere is very uncertaine.'

He is so one with his wife that he has never even thought it necessary to express her acquiescence in the line he has taken; she has evidently been heart and soul with him at every point of the painful struggle; she has fortified, cheered, and sympathised with him in every step of the sacrifices that have fallen upon both; she has never even remonstrated for the sake of the children, and after the wretched three days to Rotterdam, Mary, just arrived with her two little ones 'in this cold country,' makes no moan, but only sends her humble service in a postscript to Lady Sussex, and 'desires her wearisome journey may excuse her silence.'

Lady Sussex replies: 'I cannot tell you how wellcom ^{Jan. 9,} ^{1644.} your letter was to mee, for the windes was so boyoustrous hear that i had you often in my thoughts with fear. . . . the other day I harde all your horses was will, your sarvant brought one of your finemares hether, i cannot yet put him off. I offerde it for 15*l*., but they will not give so much, for hear is but littil money amongst us, though the hole company be still hear you left.' In answer to Mary's postscript, she assures her that her affections are to her as to the dearest of her own, and she hopes she may find 'somethinge of plesuer

wher you are, the gittir i hope will take you up much, strive for cherfullnes with itt.' One wonders how the poor guitar 'of Ebony enlayd with mother pearle' had fared during the 'tempestuous violent weather.'

Jan. 5,
1644.

Sir R. Burgoyne congratulates him on 'your safe arrivalls where you are, though a plase never intended,' and adds that Ralph's cousin, Col. Fiennes, is condemned to be beheaded, 'but itt is possible he may live as long as you or I.'

Jan. 14,
1644.

After a fortnight's rest at Rotterdam, Sir Ralph is arranging to move on to Rouen; he sends '26 percells of goods for my use there, marked R.V. No. i. to 26,' 'in the shipp caled the Fortune'; he writes to an agent, 'I hope to bee at Roan before they come, but if I should be stayed longer by any misfortune, I must then intreate you to take care to get them sett upp in some saife dry place.' . . . 'The goods containe wering apparrell, Linen, Pickturs, and other Houshold stuffe, all of it hath been used; there is noe Marchandice amongst it. I pray use some meanes that the Searcher may not open any thing till I come with the Keyes, a little money perhapps will Blinde his Eyes, or at least make him deferre the opening of them till the Keyes come'; custom-house officers remaining unchanged, with all that has come and gone, since Sir Ralph's travelling days.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BURNING OF HILLESDEN HOUSE.

1644-1645.

SIR RALPH is settled at Rouen, but not at all reconciled to his lot. 'The difficulties of my last journeys, and the doubts and feares I have for my little family, together with the miseries of my native country,' he writes, 'have made me soe conversant with afflictions, that this World is growne tedious and life it selfe a Burden to mee. . . . This place is full of variety of newes concerning England; every one reports as hee would have it—out of w^{ch}, I (that desire, and pray for peace) can gather nothing but ye expectation of a generall ruine.' He has had no news of his friends for four months, 'I have thought it more than 4 yeares,' and he tells Doll Leeke that having heard nothing 'from your selfe or any other friende neare you, I have sent a servant to see if there bee any such creatures left alive. Therefore let me intreate you (if you are livinge still) to write and write and write againe and never give over writing till one of your letters come with saifety to your affectionate servant.' To Nat. Hobart he says, 'certainly the distractions of these times have buried as many men alive as dead,' and to Nat's wife, 'sweet Nan,' he pours out his woes at greater length.

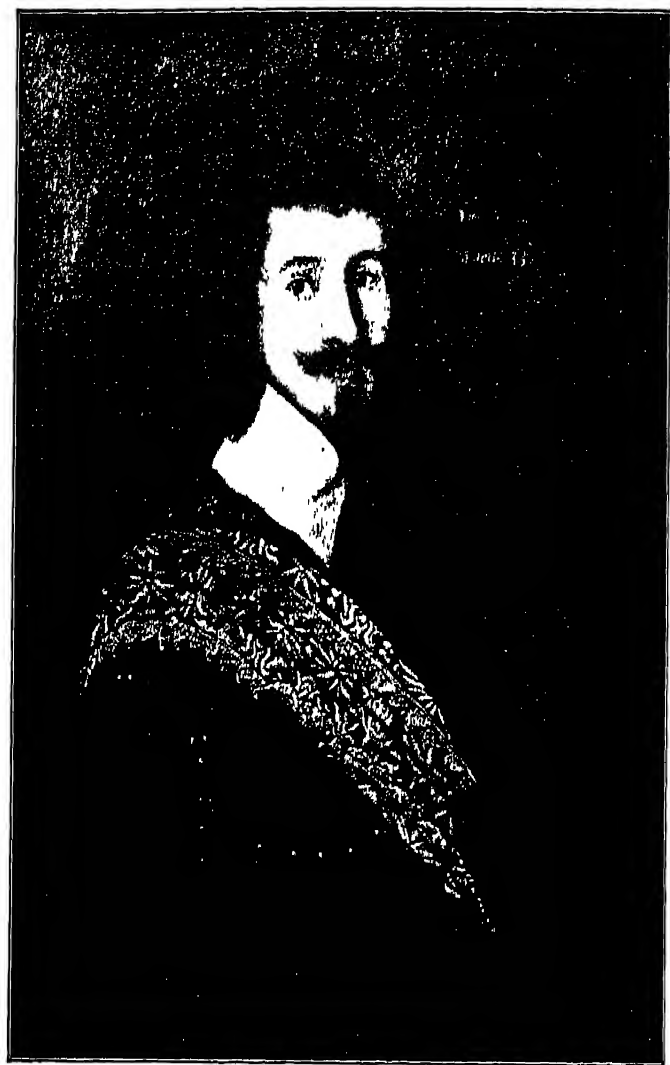
'I doubt you are now in a very ill condition for want of a playfellow, for these distractions have banished all mirth out of poore England, and I thinke out of the whole world too, for where I have beene there is noe sign of it, but perhapp my being soe seasond with afflictions like the man whose continuall lookeing through a greene glasse madd all things seeme greene to him, soe my perpetuall troubles make

March 7,
1644.

all things appear sad and black to mee. God of his mercy send us peace that wee may once more enjoy our good old friendes. In the meanwhile I shall love and pray for you. Sweete do you the like for me.' The same messenger conveys letters to Mrs. Eure, 'Brother and Sister Gardiner,' to the Sydenhams, and to Mr. Fountain.

The news from England, so ardently desired, was sad and startling enough when it came. Hillesden, which had been a second home to all Dame Margaret Verney's children, had been besieged, taken, and totally destroyed by fire.

The Dentons of Hillesden played a considerable part in the county. The estate had been granted by Edward VI. to Thomas Denton, Treasurer of the Temple; he made it his home, and represented Bucks in the Parliament of 1554. An alabaster monument, with life-size recumbent figures of Sir Thomas and his wife Margaret Mordaunt, still exists, but has been much mutilated. Their only son Sir Alexander, a singularly handsome man, married a Herefordshire heiress, Anne, daughter of Richard Wyllyson of Suggewas. When she died in 1566, aged eighteen, with her first baby, life seemed over for him too, at twenty-three, and he consoled himself by erecting a most beautiful altar-tomb in Hereford Cathedral, on which figures of the young husband and wife lie together with the swaddled baby. But the years passed, and he took to wife Mary, daughter and heir of Sir Roger Martin, Kt., Lord Mayor of London, by whom he had a son Thomas. Dying at thirty-one, he was buried at Hillesden in 1574, and Dame Mary put up a monument to him with two Ionic pillars; so Anne and her babe lie alone, while Sir Alexander enjoys the strange distinction of having two monuments in different counties and dioceses. His son Sir Thomas (Margaret Verney's father) was far more commonplace and prosperous; he was an important man in the county, representing it in several Parliaments. He was succeeded by his son Alexander, M.P. for Buckingham in three parliaments; 'who adhering to the King, was a very great sufferer for his loyalty.' He married Mary Hampden, niece of Sir Alexander, said to have been John Hampden's



SIR ALEXANDER DENTON, KT., OF MILLESDEN

guardian. Her picture, and that of her husband, Sir Alexander Denton, are both at Claydon. His face is handsome and sensitive, with a capacity for suffering in it like his grandfather's, and an expression of patient courage. He must have been torn in pieces by the vehemence with which the different members of his family espoused the two sides of the quarrel. His eldest son, John, was a colonel in the King's service; his brother William was Court physician; his sister, Mrs. Isham, was an enthusiastic Royalist; his brother-in-law, Sir Edmund Verney, had just lost his life in the King's service, and three of his Verney nephews were still fighting for the cause; Ralph had taken strongly the Parliament side, and Hampden, his wife's famous cousin, had been their foremost man in the House of Commons and in the field; while his brother Alexander Hampden, tried by court-martial for complicity in a Royalist plot, had lately died in confinement.

Sir Alexander had recently lost both his wife and his mother. In the beginning of '44, besides his own daughters, and his nieces (who were constantly coming over from Claydon to visit their cousins), his sisters Susan Denton and Elizabeth Isham and her husband were living with him. Mrs. Isham complained some months before of having soldiers quartered upon them, evidently of the Parliament side—'there is one hundred men in our one House, which my thinkes is very harde to be put in one house, and we being allmost 50 in family.' She had been greatly enraged by the incivility of 'Sir Pie,' who seems to have been in command, the injury he has done her will never go out of her mind; from the soldiers they have received 'no ronge,' they used them courteously, but Sir Robert Pye has called her a malignant!—she is beside herself with indignation, she will make her 'nagge' wear her colours, to show them to all the world, and she would make 'Sir Pie' wear her ribbon if she could get at him. Mrs. Isham considers Ralph responsible for what she calls 'this Shameful hisnes.' But graver troubles were at the door.

Sir Alexander threw himself more and more earnestly

into the struggle. Hillesden lay in an important position—between Oxford, where the King was in garrison, and Newport Pagnell, which was held by the Parliament troops under Sir Samuel Luke, with a communication by Aylesbury, securing the north road from London. Early in 1644 Colonel Smith took command of the place for the King, built barns and stabling for cavalry, and dug a trench half a mile in circumference, enclosing the house and church; far too large an extent for his troops to occupy.

The country in all directions was swept by forage parties from both sides; Colonel Smith, with a body of troopers, carried off a drove of cattle, with money and other valuables, belonging to a tenant of Mr. Hampden. When they reached Hillesden a violent dispute arose as to the partition of the spoil; Major Amnion, 'an uncommon frenzy man,' claimed all the horses and a large share of the booty for his troop. A general mutiny took place, and the major, who had imprisoned several soldiers, was obliged to release them, and give up his claim. This was not the only ill-consequence of the expedition. The owner of the cattle arrived at Hillesden to ransom them, probably much annoyed at having been attacked from a house belonging to a relation of his landlord. He was made to pay 80*l.* for his stock; upon which, indignant at his loss, he claimed compensation of 160*l.* from the Parliamentary commanders at Aylesbury, which first showed them the danger of permitting so strong a Royalist garrison to hold Hillesden. A surprise was attempted by a force of 300 horse and foot, but unsuccessfully; upon which Sir Samuel Luke prepared for a regular attack. One half of the men marched, under the command of Colonel Oliver Cromwell, to Steeple Claydon, where they encamped for the night around a barn, still known as the Camp Barn. The Royalist garrison had meantime been hard at work. They had summoned all the country people, manufactured a wooden cannon from an elm tree stoutly hooped with iron, and had obtained five small pieces of ordnance from Oxford, with ammunition, which they stored in the church. Nearly 1,000 labourers were employed to complete the trenches and

throw up a mound on which to mount the artillery. But it was too late, and seeing themselves unexpectedly surrounded on all sides, they sent out a flag of truce. Finding, however, that they could obtain no terms short of unconditional surrender, Colonel Smith proposed to defend the works; but the ditch was only knee deep in places, and the assailants overwhelming in numbers: the defenders were obliged to retire, some into the house, others to the church. A second assault was made, and the church carried—marks of the struggle being still seen in bullet holes in the old oak door; Colonel Smith, seeing the hopelessness of any further defence, surrendered on promise of quarter. The prisoners, and amongst them Sir Alexander and his brother, were marched off to Padbury, a village some three miles away, ‘where they passed the night in great discomfort.’ The next day they were taken to Newport Pagnell. It is difficult to ascertain the exact truth about the treatment of the garrison of 263 men; the *King's News* accuses Sir Samuel Luke of great barbarity; the Parliamentary reporter admits the death of thirty-one men.

The morning after the surrender, a trooper, striking his musket against the wainscoting of one of the rooms, discovered a large sum of money; further search was made, and more treasure found concealed, particularly under the lead roof. Later in the day came news of the advance of a body of troops from Oxford, and it was determined to evacuate the place. Luke withdrew to Newport, Cromwell to Buckingham; the house was set on fire and burnt almost to the ground.

A letter from Sir Alexander to his steward has been preserved, written from Newport: ‘Blagrove, I woulde have you send mee by Tyler that bag of silver w^h Berney left wth you long since and Seale it upp. . . . Bid him also take a viewe of y^e house y^t was burnt upon Tuesday, y^t I may have some certayne information of w^t destruction is fallen upon mee, and whether it bee possible to rebuild those walls that are standing if y^e distractions of y^e tim^s should settle. I thancke God I am yet in health notwithstanding these many

March 6,
1644.

misfortunes are fallen upon mee, and my comfort is I knowe myself not guilty of any fault.'

It is a brave, simple, spirited letter; he was not crushed by his losses, and intent only on doing his best to set things right once more. He was afterwards removed to London, and committed to the Tower on March 15, whence he wrote a few days later to Sir Ralph :

March 28
April 7,
1644.

'S',—I was gladd to see your servant, allthough in a place I have not till now beene used unto, the tower of London, whither I was comitted uppon Saturday last, beeinge taken at my owne howse by Lieutenant Generall Cromwell with some 4,000 horse and foote with him, I only cominge accidentally thither some 2 dayes before to remove my familie, the kinge havinge placed a garrison there.' 'Those officers that commanded that place were taken and some 150 men, and some 19 killed on both sydes, the howse pillaged, all my cattell and wine taken away, my house the next day burnt downe to the grounde and but one house left standinge in that end of the toun. Captayne Tho. Verney taken prisoner that came only to see his sisters, and all my own servants are as yett detain'd. It endamaged me at the least 16,000*l*. . . . My children and neeces not fayrly used yett noe imodest action, and the resydue of my family are yett at Sir Ralph Verney's howse.' Penelope, who with Ralph's other sisters was in the house, writes: 'When it pleased God to lay that great affliction on my uncle, I was more consarned for him, but I did stand so great a los in my own particular that it has been a half undoing to me. We were not shamefully used in any way by the souldiers, but they took everything and I was not left scarce the clothes of my back.' Mrs. Isham described how 'Hillesden parke pales be every one up and burned or else carried away, and the Denton children like to beg.'

April 19,
1644.

Sir Alexander writes again: 'You may see what I suffered in 2 dayes, cannot be but allmost every man's fortune by degrees, if these most unhappe tymes continue but a short tyme. I here the kinge hath sent a warrant to gather upp all those rents about our county lately sequestred (which

are very many, some of the principall I will give you, Twiford, Stowe, Fulbrook, Quainton, Doddershall, with many more) and a clause in it, in case the tennants bringe them not in by this day, they must abide the mercy of the soldiers; this warrant beeing sent to the House my lord Gen. was desyred to send horse into the county to defend them; which will prove the greatest mischeefe is to me a great question. I feare it may be the cause to draw the whole body of both armies into these parts. Now I thinke this sad story wilbe enough to give you a breakfast without any more kickshawes, and if france cann afford me such an other dish of disasters, send it me that I may compare them, but I will close your stomach with a cawdle of comfort, which is, we are in greate hope by the next you shall hear that propositions of peace wilbe sent unto the kinge. I pray God grant there may be nothinge putt into that pott may spoyle the whole mess.' Ralph writes to his brother Edmund: 'Suffer me to tell you ^{April 19,} how much I am afflicted for the ruine of sweet Hillesden and ^{1644.} the distresses that hapened to my aunt and sisters. God knowes what is become of my unhappie brother that was there taken. . . . I know all that side hates him and I feare they will make him feell the weight of their displeasure; from w^{ch} misfortune God in mercie keepe you and poore Harry—my deare brother farewell.'

Tom Verney remained a prisoner for many weeks, part of the time in St. John's College, Cambridge, whence he writes furiously to Roades for more money: 'ffor shame; ^{May 13,} rous up your drowsyo and decaying spiritts that the world ^{1644.} may not say we have a foole to our governour. Sir Ralphe is liable to the censure of the world, that he being a wise man should chuse a foole to govern his brothers and sisters.' 'I shall find a freind that will furnish mee with as much ^{July 6,} as will bring me to Claydon: then I hope to have my ^{1644.} peniworths. It shall not be your great language or your flearcing looks that shall any wayes daunt mee.' Ralph does send him a few pounds, so with the help of Mrs. Tom Verney's friends his ransom was made up, and he was set free.

The tragedy at Hillesden was relieved by two love stories 'gilding the dusky edge of war.' An officer in the attacking force fell in love with Sir Alexander's sister, while the colonel commanding the defence fell in love with his daughter. The former story came to a rapid *dénouement*, almost before the firing had ceased; the second a few months later, amidst the grim surroundings of the Tower of London. The first was quite a middle-aged romance. Susan Denton, whom her young nieces must have considered a confirmed old maid, roused a tender passion in the martial breast of a rough captain of the besieging forces—one Jaconiah, or Jeremiah, Abercromby, whose very name shows that he was a Republican and a Covenanter. No particulars are given; whether he was so sorry for the poor ruined ladies, who were turned out in such a miserable plight, that he proposed to take Susan and her burdens upon his own shoulders, while she 'did love him as he did pity her,' there is no means of knowing. The courtship must have been carried on during the two or three hours before the poor distressed little group of women and children walked off across the fields, weeping as they went, to take refuge at Claydon. Captain Jaconiah was not allowed a quiet moment for his love-making; three days later, John Denton, Sir Alexander's brother, writes: 'My sister Susan, her new husband Capt. Abercromby is quartered at Addington, and I feare to the indanger of bringing that house into the condicione of Hillesden.' In June he is still 'a pone sarvis,' but, says Mrs. Isham—'My sis: Susans marage is to be accomplished very suddnly if her captine be not killed, it tis him as did fust plunder Hilsdon,' certainly a curious form of introduction to his wife's relations. Mrs. Isham wrote again: 'The capt. his land is in Ierland, he is half Skote, half Inlishe. I think fue of her frinds lik it, but if she hath not him she will never have any, it is gone so far.'

March 6,
1644.

June 13,
1644.

July 13,
1644.

The end of the Jaconiah episode was as sudden as its birth: in the next year Henry Verney wrote: 'Your ante's husband was killed this week by a party from Borestall and buried at Hillesden.' So the Covenanting captain was

quietly laid among the long series of Church and Royalist Dentons in their beautiful old churchyard. His chief legacy to his wife was a baby Jaconiah, whom she was quite unable to control, and who was her greatest torment and pride in later years.

Sir Alexander never regained his liberty; he was removed on his own petition to Lord Petre's house, used for prisoners when the Tower was very full. Mrs. Isham sends a pitiful account of him a few months before his death, she being with her husband in the same prison. Some of the prisoners hoped to get leave to go out for a time, but he is not likely to be of the number, 'and then I knoe he will not lett me goe, for he doth say as he should be half dead if myselfe was not with him. I must confes he had hath anofe to a broke any mans hart, but that God hath given him a great dell of pachance, for on the seven of Augst last his sunn John was slaine within a worke att Abtone [Abingdon], as Sr. Will Wallers forces had made . . . To tell you how it was done I shall want the wordes of wore, but never did I heare of a more bravor pice of sarvis done, and if his life had bine spared, the hole Towne had bine his one. They came on so Galiently as there tooke ye Pickes out of the Enemies handes, and then a drak [a brass field-gun] wente of and kiled him in the Plase and 7 Bollets was found in his Brest, and beside himselfe thay was but 7 or 8 kiled, none of note but him, for thay all retretd when thay see him fall for he commanded in chefe. This you must thinke is a grete troble to his father as did love him so well.'

Aug. 15,
1644.

Colonel John Denton had been severely wounded in the thigh in some of the earlier fighting at Hillesden, and had only lately recovered; he received no fewer than thirty wounds at the last, 'that good young man whose very enemies lament him.' Sir Ralph wrote to Sir Alexander, 'I must ever account it as on of my greatest and particular afflictions to loose the man that you and I did love soc well, but this is our comfort, hee lived and died most gallantly, and questionlesse is now most happy: kings must pile upp

Sept. 2,
1644.

there crownes at the gates of the grave, and lay downe there septers at the feet of Death, then let not us poore subjects thinke (or desire) to bee exempted: length of Daies doth oftner make our sinns the greater then our lives the better, then let not us repine at that good hand of God that (observing his inocency) snacht him from this wicked world to reigne with him for ever, but rather let us waite with patience till our owne change comes.' A few days later he writes: 'To you and mee (being now made conversant with sorrowes and misfortunes), it must needes bee good and joyfull tidings to bee assured a day will come (and non knowes how soone), not only to put a period to all our miseries heere, but to crowne us with future glory, and bring us to our old and best friends (for new are like the times, full of unconstancie and falsehood), with whom wee shall (without compliment) perpetually remaine to on another as I am to you.'

Sept. 9,
1644.

Sir Alexander's letters from the Tower are full of public affairs and the movements of the armies; he was well supplied with news in which he took the keenest interest. It must have been a comfort to him in his captivity, that his daughter had found a protector; but we are not told how their fellow-prisoner 'young Smith, once of the House of Commons, but now a Colonel' (as Sir Roger describes him), contrived to carry on his courtship of Margaret Denton. Mrs. Isham writes to Sir Ralph: 'One sunne is ded, yet another sune in lawe he hath this muntth or 5 wickes for Coronall Smyth is mareyed to his dafter Margrete, and I thinke will be a happy mach if these ill times doth not hindre it, but he is still a Prisenor. So you may thinke itt a bolde venter, but if these times hold, I thinke thay will be non men lefte for woman.' Their adventures were not yet at an end, for Colonel Smith made his escape; his bride, Mrs. Isham and Susan Verney were promptly imprisoned on the charge of aiding and abetting him. Mrs. Isham writes to Sir Ralph: 'When I was in prison, thaye would not lett me have so much as a Pene and Incke, but all of us was innocence Prisenors, and so came out without examing, for

Aug. 15,
1644.

Oct. 9,
1644.

none could have a worde against us ; your Sis Susan, and my nice neece, was my feelore Prissnors, and for our owne passones noe hurt, only our purssis payd the feeses ; much in gage we be to youre Bro : Tomas and his wife, for thay did more for us than all our friends beside.'

There had been some question of moving them, but Mrs. Isham does not know where it is to 'more than the Summer Islands,' and the company would be only 'prisoners and strangers'; they can receive and forward letters, but 'the gardes will lucke into them.'

Susan also gives her brother an account of it: 'I am now released, butt this day my keeper was wth mee to tell mee y^t the iudg advocate was angry that I was released wthout his knowleg, butt I have promised to appeare before him when he will send for mee. I am confident y^t he will never looke after mee further. I was kept prisoner 8 days, so was the rest of my company, butt never examined, the tooke mee only upon suspision: ther was nothing could be brought against mee: for I was noe more giulty of what I was accused of then you ware: itt was thought that I had a hand in helping of my new coson out of prison, butt indeed I had nott—I hope that I shall never under take to doe any shuch thing wheare by I may bring my selfe into trouble,' she adds with a candid selfishness, transparent in its simplicity!

Sir Ralph's letters in January tell him that 'there is no news stirring, but that the Archbishop of Canterbury is to be beheaded to-morrow upon Tower Hill, and that Sir Alexander Denton dyed in Peterhouse on New Year's day of a feaver,' which seems a sufficient budget of calamity. Sir Alexander was only forty-eight, but his health gave way just when his friends expected to accomplish his release. Henry writes: 'Our poore and dear freind Sir Allaxsander good man is dead, a dyed one newersday, a is tomorow caryed to his owne church'; all the Verneys lament him, even Tom is moved. Sir Alexander was a great loss to Ralph; he reviews the recent troubles in his family, of

Jan. 24,
1645.

which 'the chiefe Pillars are already snatcht away by death'; 'my poore Uncle, who within 8 or 9 months last past, did mee more curtesies and expressed more freindshipp and affection to me, then in all his life before. . . . I have such unkinde (nay I may say unnaturall) letters, from some soc neare mee, that truly, did I not see it under there owne Hands. . . . I could not have credited that such a totall decay of freindshipp and common honesty could possibly have beene amongst those that profess Christianity.' 'These trying times have discovered so much knavery in soe many men that heretofore appeared examples of piety.' 'Few men can say they have a freind now,' he writes to Sir W. Hewett (or Hewytt), 'whoso face they knew a weeke before these troubles.'

There had been a rumour that Claydon House was to be burnt. Sir Roger Burgoyne wrote: 'I hope God in his mercy will take that man [that intends it] out of the world before he be guilty of so devilish a sin as to wrong so innocent a man. If God shall please to let that devil loose I must account it as an affliction intended from above for me, no personall affliction being bad enough. . . . I have not heard of any such usage that Sr W. Uvedall hath had to be plundered, but I am sure it is not with the approbation of the parliament. As for souldiers I know not what they may do, for I could never trust them.' The hand of the Parliament was heavy also in other directions. Sir Roger writes: 'Ther was last Thursday a very bad sermon preached neere Uxbridge by one Mr. Love, a young man, which gave a great deale of offence, but the man is imprisoned for it.'

Feb. 6,
1645.

Mrs. Isham is continually in trouble, her husband being in prison for a long time, apparently for being unable to pay the heavy exactions which were now laid upon the land, and she cannot approve of his exchanging with another prisoner, as that would prove him a 'delinquate.' In the plundering and burning of Hillesden House she lost not only money and clothes, but bonds and other business papers, which increased their difficulties. She presses Ralph to repay the

loan she made to his father, or to give her security on certain lands near Claydon, fearing in case of his death that she should lose it. Money he has none, and he cannot grant her the particular land in question, while she on her side objects to the security he offers, because the land is in a disturbed district.

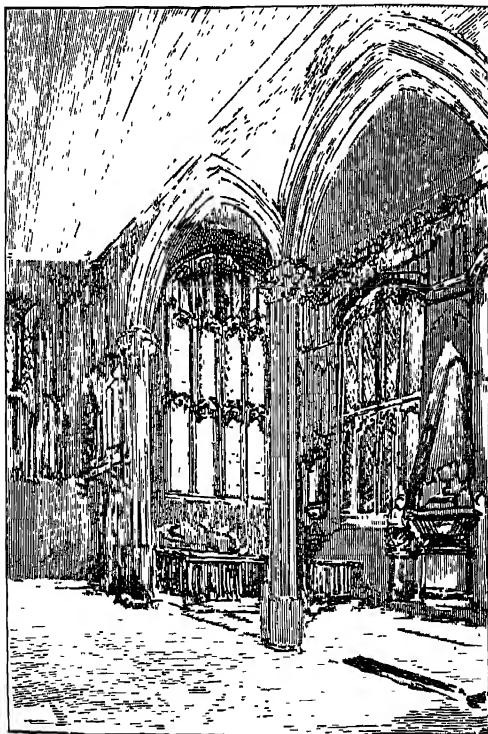
‘Through carlisnes of my husband, and the house being burned, he hath nothing to show for Rateliff; and so it will be seased on as a chattell and go away from him, and wee to lose all as he had. . . . For our clothes we must sew fig leves together, we lost all by fier, and since I have had but one gown. I could wish as it would last me forty yeres as the childrenes of Iserells did, but, however, now I am come to town, I have not where withal to buye another.’

As her troubles increase her language becomes more and more involved: ‘blame me not if I press you to take some course . . . should you misskary, and you are but mortall, and since you must die att one time, you may die att any time, but the Lord sende you a good and a Longe Life hear as when ever you goe . . . it will be never the sooner, for my sending to you.’ . . . ‘some burnt by chance and others on purpos, I thinke by winter we shall not have a House to be in. The Lorde mende us and put an ende to these unhapy times or ellse parpare us for to in joye a House not made with handes Eternall in the Heavens.’ After all, good Aunt Isham had not lost interest in this world’s affairs, for she dates this letter in a postscript—‘ye fust of May but never so dule an one, and so fue chases in hide Parke as I heare!’

Eventually her husband regains his liberty, and she writes more cheerfully that they hope to be together again, though without half a guinea between them.

Some 250 years have passed since the stormy days of the siege. In 1648 ‘they are building there againe and intend to sett upp a little house where the old one stood.’ Iillesden House rose from its ashes and was described in the succeeding century as a ‘good old house’ with ‘a very bold terrace.’

This, too, has in turn been destroyed so completely that not a trace of it remains. Mrs. Isham has passed beyond the reach of vexatious creditors and 'souldgers'—the 'chases' in great numbers have returned to Hyde Park—but the Dentons are extinct, and 'sweete Hillesden' Church stands once more alone, in the silence of the green fields and over-arching elm trees.



INTERIOR OF HILLESDEN CHURCH
(From a sketch by *Parthenope*, Lady Verney)

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN EXILE.

1644 1646.

‘ONLY one member of the House of Commons,’ says Mr. Gardiner, ‘amongst those who had remained at their posts at Westminster after the first months of the Civil War—Sir Ralph Verney—refused the Covenant at the end of 1643, preferring the miseries of exile to the soiling of his conscience.’ The ‘miseries’ arrived without a moment’s delay; scarcely had the poor exiles recovered from their winter journey, when news of the terrible calamity which overwhelmed the Denton family came to darken what his best friend called ‘your most uncomfortable and unhappy absence.’

A Parliamentarian in the King’s prosperous days, a Puritan under Laud, a Churchman under the Presbyterians, dubbed a Royalist under Cromwell, Sir Ralph’s conscience always drove him into a minority, especially when his interests lay on the other side. He is the type of an idealist who raises the level of political life, but is disliked and distrusted by practical men. The robust politician, who never doubts his party’s wisdom or his own, is provoked with a Sir Ralph and his scruples, and Cousin Parker expresses the views of many more.

‘In my opinion you steere a course wherein there is almost no hope of indemnity on either side, but certaynty of greate losse and blame from both. If you shall say there is much to be disliked in ether partye, my thinkes that should not seeme strange, or alienate you totally from ether, for in these publicke divisions, where religion and liberty are in-dangerd, all men ought to adhere to that cause which is

Nov. 21,
1614.

dictated to them to bee y^e better and y^e more harmless by y^e light of nature and the most forcible indications of reason. No man can say that God has left him no part to act, nor no station to make good; and if some poore mechanick might pleade himselfe to bee wholly unusefull and inconsiderable in these grande cases, yet you are apparently berreft of such excuses. You have an account to make to God, to y^r Countrye, to y^r Freinds, to y^r selfe, and y^e charge of that account wilbee high and valuable: and to thinke that you can exonerate all by saying you were dubious, and not satisfied in all particulars is most strange. Tis impossible y^t you should bee equilibrions in y^e maine or in y^e generality of y^e controversye, and if ether scale have but one od grayne in it to sway you, you are as much bounde to obey that sway, as He is that has y^e strongest propension of judgment.'

Henry Verney of course agrees with Parker and urges his brother 'to take the Pitt one way or other . . . these times are likely to hold very long, and beelive it, non will bee in soe sad a condition as those that stand newtewers.'

Sir Ralph replies to Parker: 'Since y^e perusall of your freindly lines I have had a farr greater desire then ever to satisfie my selfe in those particulars that first induced mee to steere this course, and I shall most willingly use all y^e wit I have (joyned with that of others) to facilitate that worke. The truth is when I saw y^e covenant pressed with such severity, that your kинnesman meerly for refusall (though in a most modest humble manner) was not only suspended and soe made incapable to serve his country, but reserved for greater punishment, . . . I thought it might be lesse offensive to the House and more convenient for my selfe, to retreat for a while till the fury of that flame were over then to doe that, whereof I soe much doubted, or trouble them to invent punishments (where y^e law appointed non), for such an unfortunate creature, for soe I have just cause to stile myself, being I heare y^e King hath already sequestered my estate, and y^e Parliament dayly threatens to doe that and more. Sr I am very sencible of my owne misfortune and

must needs agree with you in this greate trueth that what side soever overcomes there is almost noe hope of indemnity. But you well know, rather then make a sollemne vow and covenant wherein I am not satisfied I must chuse to suffer.'

The sequestration of Sir Ralph's estate by the King did not entail any loss eventually, but his fears of sequestration by the Parliament were only too well founded.

Doll Leeke has 'heard severall parliment men call' Sir Ralph a delinquent; 'some say he has 3 thousand pound ayeare and that they resolve to have it sudenly; all the mischefe that they can do him he must expect, which appears to me a straining cruilty and an ill reward for his good opinion of them.'

The poor family in exile have their share of sickness, and Ralph writes sadly to Doll: 'the Boy hath had a feavour accompanied with a vomiting, and y^e Girle very full of y^e small Pox, and I myselve have beene ill and in Phisick, and my wife in soe many feares and troubles for us all that I leave you to consider her distresse.' Sir Roger writes of Peg: 'I pray God recovere y^r pretty daughter, I hope it is the greatnesse of your affection to hir, and not the extremity of hir distemper which makes you so solicitous about hir.' Doll trusts 'God will spare their life; they are miserable times we live in and sartainly those are happiest that goes first . . . my sisters children will be sudenly in a condition to starve, and most of my frinds.' Sir Nathaniel, 'a stranger in my own country and destitute of friends,' begs for 50*l.*; 'Sweet Nan' expects a child, 'an unseasonable blessing,' says the poor man, 'but God's will must bee done.' Susan, after 'the janders,' asks for an extra 10*l.* a year, which Ralph grants, while he says—'would God every one of my own children were sure of 40*l.* a year . . . I should sleep much quieter I assure you. . . .' The only pleasant bit of news from Claydon is that 'little Mr. John is in health and walking pretty strongly.'

In contrast to the high tragic tone of most of the correspondence we have a droll little storm in a teacup. Mr. June 1645.

Wakefield, one of the English refugees, is about to take a travelling servant on Sir Ralph's recommendation, when to his horror and delight—he does not quite know which it is—he sees a letter of his printed in 'the papers from London,' as a 'Gentleman of quality out of ffrance,' and finds the servant Thomer has been gossiping about him; 'tho' in effect it will prove but an idle busyness, hardly worth a man's taking notice of, yett I can assure you there has been so much talk of me at London,' and so on, and so on. He asks Sir Ralph 'whether it will be safe to nourish such a sickbrained, idle, giddy-headed fellow.' Sir Ralph replies at great length about 'this ugly business,' but characteristically he does not wish to condemn Thomer unheard. The letter printed by *The Diurnall* describes the services held at Sir Richard Browne's, 'the sermons, the common prayer, the booke of execration against the Parliament and their faction, as they term them, duly and devoutly read by the Bishop of Londonderry. Dr Cousins, who came hither disguised in a miller's habit, and others of these worthy instruments of superstition, keeps a constant preachment of railing against the roundheads, just as the capuchins do against the Protestants. . . . They hate the French Protestants, and seldom or never come to church but with the Papists.' The '*Diurnals*' themselves have a hard time of it. 'The Scout' which Sir Roger had been sending abroad 'is clapt up heere as I am informed for some unadvised expressions in his pamphlet, he is not this week to be heard of.'

Feb. 1645.

Sept. 24,
1645.

In September the blow fell that poor Ralph had so much dreaded, and which he had hoped to the last might have been averted. He was deprived of his seat in the House of Commons. Sir Roger, deeply grieved, writes of it under a thin disguise. '. . . My friend is voted out etc. the 22nd of this instant; and it was his servants fortune to be at it, who had not been ther long before; his endeavor and care were not wanting in anything he could do. Writs are to be issued for new elections for that place; he is likewise to be sequestred, I would to god I might know his pleasure in all things speedily . . . it was for no crime in the world,' he adds

later, 'but only his long absence; others were laid to his charge of having been in the King's quarters, but a servant of his who was ther present did fully satisfy them to the contrary (who, I may say for him thus much that he did leave no means unattempted, nor friend unsolicited to prevent that sad misfortune). . . . My dearest heart, the L^d of heaven bless and preserve both thee and thine and supply the want of outward comfort to thee by himself.'

Ralph feels it to be 'one of the greatest and most in-
 pressible afflictions that ever yet befell me, for which my
 soule shall mourn in private, for I want words to declare my
 grief. God in mercy give me patience and forgive those that
 did it, without affording me the favour, nay I might say the
 justice, of a summons. Deare hart, tell mee what particulars
 were objected against me, that I may cleare myselfe to thee
 and one friend more, whome I desire to satisfie, for I protest
 though I know myselfe guilty of many crimes, yet I am not
 conscious of any offence committed against them, and were
 I not well assured of this, my owne Hart would make mee
 more onhappy then all theire votes can doe.'

Oct. 20,
1645.

'There are new Burgishes chosen in Buckinghamshire, as one Scott for Aylesbury, and Major Brown of London for Wickhame.' [Lord Fermanagh in a vicious little note says: 'This Scott was since hanged and quartered.' He was one of the Regicides.] And what makes the whole cut deeper and more cruelly is that it was not an enemy that had done this thing, but 'mine own familiar friend,' the great Patriot party, with whose thoughts and actions Ralph had sympathised so earnestly.

A few weeks later, Sir John Lecke is extremely ill; he decays every day more and more. He and others urge Ralph to come home and compound; he would only too gladly do so if consistent with honour and safety, but none could compound without first taking the Covenant. 'I confesse I had much rather suffer at home, soo it might not bee in prison,' he writes, but if 'this single thought must needes be hightned to a crime worthy of a total ruine,' he hesitates to leave his harbour of refuge.

Immediately after the fatal vote Mrs. Isham wrote: 'The last wicke I could a sent you the Ill nuse of your being out of the House, for it was my fortune to be att the Dore att the time, a boutte my nesnes Denton and all the Rest of the childrine which be licke to bege for it. They holde on the sequestⁿ, and make such busel as you cannot Immagion, and now I feare within a while the Licke will come upone youre land, but if it doth, thare will be noe way but for you to compound for all your Estate, before havoke be made of it; but this way will cost redy money which is more worth then any land. I did axe . . . your frinds and mine which way you had best to take, if you should be sequestred, and this was that as they told me. I should be lofte [loth] to see that befall you, as hath our fammily, but this way is licke to make all of us alike; the Lorde give us all pachinces for a beggen we must all goe if this world holde. Your bond will be taken if you was here, but being absent I know it will never be taken.'

A few days later Henry writes: 'My acquaintance with your friend Sir Roger is not so great as I could wish, yet I am well knowne to him for we meet often at Westminster and other places, where we discourse much of you; I think a loves you dearly. I wish you had been so happy in time to be advised by him for a tells me a did press you by divers letters to return afore the blow was given. That we^{ch} is done cannot be recalled, yet, dear friend, let me desire you to take better care for the future, for long absence I doubt will prove an incurable disease; it is the opinion of your best and wisest friends, divers of whom impute your actions to scruple of conscience, or else, beelive it, by the carage of your business they would account you mad.' Harry expresses himself more tersely to Mun; their brother 'has played the bird called the goose,' an opinion which he doubtless expresses in all sorts of society, says Sir Ralph, when the phrase has been kindly brought to his ears.

Ralph, with his heart wholly centred on England, seems to have given but little thought to the country of his banishment; writing was his absorbing occupation, letters from home

his greatest solace; he kept a calendar in which he entered an abstract and sometimes a full copy of letters written and received. Sir Thomas Hewytt only echoed Ralph's own thoughts when he wrote to him: 'The separation of friends I find to be worse than the sequestration of estates, from the continuance of which I daly implore our good God with a piece of our old Letany.'

He read a good deal during his enforced leisure, to judge by his requests to Dr. Denton for various works and the lists of those that he receives from time to time, some just published. *Inter alios*: Milton's *Iconoclastes*: *The Levellers vindicated*; Prynne's *Historical Collection of ancient parliaments*; an impeachment against Cromwell and Ireton by Lilburne; Ascham; Bishop Andrewes 2 *Manuals*; 'Hooker his 6 and 8 books'; *History of Independency* [Clement Walker's]; '2 *Sclaters*.' Dr. Denton heartily recommends *Sclater* to 'Landlady's reading'; it 'treats or rather indeed mencions *AntiXst*; . . . tell her it is now time to leave her *Romantz* to please me; it is one of the best bookis I ever read; he is strangely piquante and short and strangely convincing.' Ralph knew French sufficiently to read and write it, though he had not acquired any fluency in speaking it. Dr. Denton writes to him: 'If y^u would doe a good worke indeed you should translate *Canterbury* and *Chillingworth* their books into French, for certainly never any books gave a greater blow to papacy than those two.' 'Laud's Book against Fisher' was one of those which King Charles recommended to his daughter Elizabeth, at their last interview, 'to ground her against Popery.' Henry Verney also Jan. 1645. sends Sir Ralph 'the Bishop's last sermon & prayer; it is I assure you, a true booke & a good one.'

As mistress of the family Mary has at least the comfort of being very busy; they can keep but two maids, and one little boy, 'soe we are but 7 in family, and I know not how to do with lesse, because of the children'; the housekeeping does not always go smoothly; Mr. Ogilvy writes from Orleans to apologise not only for the bad service of 'that graceless boy that I was so unhappy to prefer to your Ladyship, but

also for his impertinent speeches which shall be the cause that he shall hardly find another maister.'

That some of the refugees treated their French servants in the overbearing spirit traditionally attributed to the Englishman abroad, and that the quick-witted Frenchman cheated them in return, is evident from the letters.

Amongst his wandering fellow-countrymen who passed through the town, none was more welcome at Sir Ralph's board than the light-hearted and eccentric Sir Henry Newton, who found much in common with Mary's ready wit and merry humour. The friendship was of long standing, as Sir Henry's father, Adam Newton, had been a colleague of Sir Edmund Verney's in the households of Prince Henry and Prince Charles. Sir Henry, who had set up house at Rouen, writes to Sir Ralph: 'I forgott in my last to acquaint you with the parting of my Boy Estienne, Who having of a long time play'd some pranks, made mee at last resolve to pay him his arrearages, Chiefly 3 or 4 dayes before having been very rude to M^{rs} Cochran and in his words defi'd both her and mee, And telling her if I beate him once I should never doe it twice, w^{ch} I understood him was by runing away. And though hee knew he was complain'd of, hee was so sencelesse as for a whole afternoon when my wife and I were abroad with a coach to neglect us and bee debauch'd with another lacquay should have been also following the coach. The next day I bestow'd a little beating of him, and did it heartily, though without passion: Upon w^{ch} hee ran to the doore and call'd for his things, and swore hee never would enter again, though a thousand devills drove him, But I over hearing him, sent one that was too strong for him and brought him back, and tooke a little more paines upon him, to shew him hee was mistaken. For I would beate him twice; And to bee beforehand with him, made him unbutton, that so hee might goe his way, as naked as hee came, if hee thought good. This startled him, but heardly wrought peccavi from his high stomach. But I perceiving hee would not stay long and might take some worse opportunity if I permitted it, dispatch'd him going, but with his cloaths, out

of the sole respect I have to some at Blois that are his kindred. Every one wonders that one that deserv'd a worser beating so long should take it so unkindly at the last. Hee went from heere by Pont l'Arche (they say) to Paris loaden with balades, in company of one that sings them, and debauch'd him heere. A greater knave never serv'd master, if all bee true is told mee since, of every side. If hee went away without money, it was his owne fault, both for not asking mee pardon, on one side, and for not husbanding what had been given him at times w^{ch} would have come to a good sum according to the wage hee gott heere in the house, w^{ch} hee requited so unkindly to them that hee never eate bitt of their meate without grumbling, though to my knowledge (and great wonder) hee eate as good as I did and all the same. Nay at Madame Willetts hee would pretende to whole Turkeys for his share, rather than keepe them cold for after the dancing. I could entertaine you some 2 houres longer with much of his story w^{ch} never was complain'd of till his back was turn'd. But I am gladd I'm ridd of him so, and so may you bee when you are at the end of his adventures, I being the first master putt him away, Hee ran away from all the rest.'

So much for the foreign lacqueys. English servants were more trustworthy, but if they did not consume whole turkeys for supper, they quarrelled with the foreign food, and were as hard to please abroad as their successors of to-day. 'I know noe English maids will ever bee content (or stay a weeke),' wrote Sir Ralph, 'to fare as thes servants faire. . . . Noe English maide will bee content with our diet and way of liveing: for my part, since this time twelve-moneth, I have not had one bit of Rost meate to dinner, and now of late, I rost but one night in a weeke for Suppers, which were strainge in an English maide's oppinion.' But though Luce and Besse quarrelled with a diet of 'potages' and 'légumes,' and doubtless thought Sir Ralph's political scruples sadly misplaced, they followed the fallen fortunes of their master with exemplary fidelity, and when Ralph writes to Mary in England as to the comparative merits of

bringing out an English maid or of getting a French one on the spot, his description of the latter makes one's hair stand on end; 'it is hard to find one here especially of our Religion'; he has heard of one whom he recommends his wife to take 'with all her faults,' 'her 2 sisters are but Ramping girles,' 'but truly she is a civill wench and plays well of the Lute, she is well cladd and well bredd, but raw to serve, and full of the Itch'! The time devoted to the study of the lute might have been more profitably spent in practising with soap and water, but cleanliness in Sir Ralph's eyes ranks far indeed after godliness, and he goes on discussing the maid's theological opinions; it may be necessary after all to dispense with Protestant orthodoxy, 'the very minister, and antients here, are served by Papists; but it would trouble us because of Fish dayes; I hope you will get one of our owne religeon either at Rouen or Paris.' Luce Sheppard is a waiting gentlewoman on intimate terms with her mistress, and is trained by her in household work. When, after anxious thought, it was settled that Mary should go alone to England in the autumn of 1646, Luce goes with her, and Besse remains to look after Sir Ralph and the children; the two maids correspond and their masters enclose their letters. Luce's brother objects to her leaving England again; knowing that he 'is a very Idle proud fellow' and that he has no comfortable home to offer her, Lady Verney sends a propitiatory offering of 'a pare of gloves trimed, to my maydes brother's wife to make them willing she should stay with me . . . but to tell the truth methinks the wench is nott soe much troubled to part with me as I am to part with her; which hath taken of the edge of my sorrow to lett her goe.' Sir Ralph replies, very anxious for her comfort on her journey, and entering as he always does into every detail of Mary's anxieties:

'You say chamber maides will have 4 or 5 pounds wages and neither wash, nor starch; that is to say they will doe nothing but dresse you, for I doe not valew theire needle work at a groate a moneth. Tis true if any of us should be sick you would want one to make such Broathes

and such like matters, but though Luce could doe it, per-happys you would not findd another that can, nor that can make creames or pyes or dresse meate they are now to find for such matters. My Budd now I have told thee my oppinion take whom you please, and doe in it what you please, for I studdy nothing but your contentment in all that I have writ about it; . . . Now for Luce's wages, it is three pounds English, and I paydd her all at Midsomer 1646, soe that at Christmas next there will bee a yeare and half wages due to her w^{ch} comes to foure pounds ten shillings, unlesse you have payed her some since you went into England. Now for giving of her, if she leave you on a suddaine and unprovided (and espetially if she goe to serve againe) I would give her the lesse, therfore findd that out, and tell her if shee will stay, you will mend her wages. . . . for tis not possible you can come without a maide or woeman to helpe you, though I beleeve Luce helped you very little at sea. Tis two daies jorney from London to Rye, and one from Deipe to Rouen and being noe more you may borrow or hire a wooman creature for such a purpose.' Eventually Luce settles to go with her mistress to Dieppe; she will take no other service, 'but the thoughts of living with her sister like a gentlewoman workes much upon her.'

Besse meanwhile had turned out a perfect treasure, and however cheaply Sir Ralph seems to rate 'a wooman creature,' he freely acknowledges his indebtedness to Besse, for the comfort of the household during her mistress's absence.

'Besse now speakes French enough to buy any thing and uppon this occation I asked her if she had any thoughts of returning home. . . . to which she answered, she had noe thoughts of parting, and that if wee stayed halfe a dozen years abroad, wee might assure ourselves of her; these were her own words.' As a proof of his regard, he buys Besse a pair of 'trimed gloves' at 1*l.* 5*s.* Mary is troubled to think that Besse's feelings may be hurt if Luce's successor is put over her, after all her faithful service: 'I know not what course in the world to take. . . . I doe not

finde being I keepe but toe maydes how I can keepe eyther a fine chambermaide or a gentlewoman for to say truth there is little or noe difference between them, for you and I have a great deale of washing and starching and beside upon those dayes that Bess doth wash there will be a greate deale of ordinary worke to doe as ye getting dinner ready and making clean ye howse, which none heare that goes so well as Luce will be content to doe, and if I should take a very plaine chambermayde, I feare Bess will not be content to doe the work she now doth to be under a plaine one; and I cannott take Bess next to me because I know she cannott starch and besides I know she can neavor learne to dress me. I am in a great straites.' The ladies of the seventeenth century, who are so capable in other matters and so far more conversant with the mysteries of the kitchen, the bakehouse, and the stillroom, than their successors of to-day, are very helpless about dressing themselves and quite dependent upon a 'gentlewoman in waiting.'

Mary returns to the subject again and again: 'I have not yet mett with a mayde, though I have seene many.' Sir Ralph also is not easy to please:

'Tell me what that maide is in Age and Parts and humour,' he writes, 'for if she bee not young and have some witt, she will bee the longer ere she get the language, and if her humour bee not merry, she will never please soe much as to bee endured in any house.' Mary at last finds a maiden who 'is very goodnatured, and a gentleman's daughter of 400*l.* a yeare . . . she is in a gentlewoman's habitt butt she saith she will not refuse to doe any thing.' This admirable young person took 'the measells,' but she seems to have returned at the end of a week prepared once more 'to doe anything.' The sight of a stranger in attendance on her mistress was, however, too much for Luce's feelings.

'Soe att night she told me,' writes Lady Verney, 'thatt if I would lett her goe for one weeke downe into the country to her brother, to settle her buseness with him, she would goe over with me for a month or toe untell I could find one

there fitting to my mind ; soe I pressently took her att her word, for I am very gladd to have her a month or toe longer upon any termes, because the greatest inconvenience thatt I shall find in a strainger will be in my journey. . . . soe I will putt of this mayde againe though truly I think tis a very good wench butt she is nott at all hansom which I know would nott please thee.'

Mary was always a notable housewife, and in France, as at Claydon, deserved her *petit nom* of 'Landladie.' She is famous for making good bread, and has acquired a portable oven for roasting apples, 'a cloche,' which she takes home with her, and Ralph advises her to give it 'to Nan Lee or who else you please that loves good apples.'

'Sirrup of violets' and 'a firkin of this country butter' were then sent as delicacies from Bucks to Normandy ; but now the tide has turned. Excellent dried fruits are mentioned from the South of France, 'cerises aigres' and grapes being the best. Though Sir Ralph appreciates the French wines, his wife is to send him from Claydon some of the old sack, to give away or to drink at home ; she replies : 'I am in great admiration at your telling me that good canarye sack will be a wellcome present to my acquaintance at blois, for I doe not know any English acquaintance I have there, and certainly you have very much altered the natures of yo french if they are growne to love sack—however . . . we may keepe it for our owne use ; for if itt be good sack I beleeve tis a very whollsom wine espetially in that hott country.'

Both Ralph and his wife take a great personal interest in the education of Mun and Peg ; Mary's music is a delight to them all, and she has a big picce of embroidery on hand, about which Ralph has a joke against her that if his business in London is like to take her as long to finish as her 'wrought sheete,' he shall not expect her speedy return.

Many English parents were sending boys abroad for education. Rouen 'is very unfit' for the purpose, wrote Sir Ralph from thence in answer to an inquiry about a boys' school, 'for heere most men speak worse French than the

poore people doe English at Northlumberland, and there are noe Protestant masters alowed to keepe a schol heere. All things exceeding Deare, but higher in the country. There are divers Universities at Sedan, Saunur, Geneva, and other fine places, and as I am told at noe unreasonable rate and not only protestant scholemasters, but whole colledges of protestants.'

July 15,
1646.

In the summer of 1645 Sir Ralph went to Paris for a time and travelled about the country; a few weeks later he settled his family at Blois, which became their headquarters for the remainder of their exile. They are very good friends with M. Testard, the Protestant pasteur there, who takes pupils. The next summer he and his wife made another little tour. 'I have been out neare two months,' writes Sir Ralph, 'viewing the Townes uppon this River of Loir, and Rochell, Borleaux, and severall other parts of this country.' He had planned a longer stay at Nantes, and had ordered provisions to be sent there from Amsterdam: 50 lbs. of sugar, 50 lbs. of raisins of the sun, 50 lbs. currants [it seems as if Mary were preparing for Christmas plum-puddings], and 50 lbs. of rice, 'all these were in bundles and the rice in bags'; they were shipped from Holland in the previous October, but Christmas went by and they had not reached Nantes even by May. A long correspondence ensues in which the ship-master gives in all conscience reasons enough for the disappearance of the 'commodities'; they were shipwrecked, they were shut in by ice [he does not say where], they were disabled by a storm, they feigned to return to another port, they put the provisions into another ship, &c., &c., and they were finally devoured by rats—'two-legged ratts,' writes Ralph; 'advise with some knowing man, I will seeke remedie against the Master in some legall way.' The agent replies that they will get no redress 'to trouble justice on so weake ground,' that the master proves it *was* 'the Ratts,' and 'that tho he had 2 Cattis aboard.' So nothing comes of it, but an addition to Ralph's many letters, though he repeats to the last his great desire 'to be quitt with the master,' who has 'first cheated mee of the goods and then layes it to the Ratts.' He has all

an Englishman's indignation at being defrauded by a foreigner, and is quite willing to spend more than the things are worth to vindicate his rights.

He would have made a longer tour, but Mary insisted upon their return, they had not a penny left, and 'wives will chide, and by the king's example, Husbands must obey !'

The Reformed Churches of the Continent watched the struggle in England with keen interest. Mr. Robert Thorner writes from Orleans to Ralph, on his return from a journey to Italy : 'In the Protestant cantons of Switzerland and at Geneva there was a solemnne publicke fast on the 10th of this month appointed for praying for the reconciling of these unhappy differences in greate Brittain and Ireland.' June 1646.

Among the smaller worries which Ralph had to endure in France was that of wearing a periwig, a fashion from which England was still free. The bills for the wigs themselves, the ribbons, the pomade, and the powder come again and again. Ralph sends minute directions about the length, style, and thickness, and encloses a pattern lock of hair ; 'let it be well curled in great rings and not frizzled, and see that he makes it handsomely and fashionably, and with two locks, and let them be tyed with black ribbon . . . let not the wig part behind, charge him to curl it on both sides towards the face.' The cost of this wig was 12 livres. Good powder seems to have been hard to obtain. Sir John Cooke sends 'a small phiole of white Cyprus powder, which I beseech you present to my Lady as an example of the best Montpelier affords, for I saw it made myself. It must be mixed with other powder, else it will bring the headache. There is a powder cheaper, but not so proper for the hair.'

Wealth and poverty are comparative terms, and though hardly knowing where to turn for the necessities of life, some of its superfluities are still indispensable for self-respect ; while Ralph is intent on his 'Pomatums,' Mary's friends amongst the Paris exiles are choosing her 'two fannes' at the Palais Royal, which cost two francs and fifteen sous, and her husband is anxious that she be furnished with proper 'pinns, oris powder and such matters' from

London, 'for they are nought here.' While powder and patches are amongst toilet necessities, tooth-brushes are new and costly luxuries; as late as 1649, an English friend asks Sir Ralph to inquire for him in Paris for the 'little brushes for making cleane of the teeth, most covered with sylver and some few with gold and sylver Twiste, together with some Petits Bouettes [*British* for Boites] to put them in.'

English society seems to Ralph's correspondents to be falling to pieces, the only happy people are those whom death releases from this mortal coil—but as long as life remains the Countess of Warwick must give evening parties, and Anne Lee, who is but little regarded in the new household, must appear at them; and if society demands an evening dress it may as well be in the latest Paris fashion—hence that young lady's letter to Lady Verney, which reads oddly enough with such a background of anxieties: 'Madam, I hear you ar at pares, you will be trim in all the new fashones, I will make no new cloues till you direct mee, and if you could without any inconvenience by mee any prity coulred stoffe to make mee a peticote, 4 Bredes of saten is enofe; I never put in more then 5 yard . . . but I hear thay ware now in Franc coulred sleses and stomicheres, therefore ther must be somthing allowed for that; but not by no means if it cannot be without any inconvenience to you, pray let mee know and I will buy mee one heere: I would not have one to cost to much; 4 or 5 pound and pray let mee know how to send the mony; and deare Madam bestoe me 30 shelings in anie prety thing for my head, to sote me out a litell.' 'I beseech you let me know as soon as you com to loundon, that I may wait on you, ther has been many shanges sence you went. I have many stories to tell you. . . . I want language to exprese my senc of your sevelity.'

1647.

When Mary is describing the presents from Paris that her English friends most value, we learn that 'wooden combs are in greate csteeme heare, butt truly I think they buy them very neare as cheape heare as there'; there is not 'anything that will be soe wellcom as gorgetts, and eyther cutt or painted

callicoes to wear under them or whatt is most in fashion ; and black or collered cales [calash, a hood] for the head ; or little collered peny or toe peny ribonings, and som black patches, or som prety bobbs, butt ye pearle ones are growne very old fashion now.' Kings may be dethroned and Parliaments may totter, but Fashion still rules society with a rod of iron !

The Earl of Devonshire had taken refuge in France not long after Sir Ralph went there. In 1645 he was sent for back to England under pain of the confiscation of all his estates ; he writes to ask Sir Ralph to return with him. Ralph replies that he wishes his affairs were in such a state that he might take advantage of Lord Devonshire's friendly offer ; 'you are now under the Lash and that of the most severest masters that ever yet were read or heard of, and from first you knew full well 'tis bootless by delays or otherwise to vex them.' The Earl, after his arrival in England, was kept as a sort of hostage at Latimer, his place in Bucks.

For a whole year the question of what course Sir Ralph should take is debated between him and his friends in England. In December 1645, Parliament resolved that privileges granted to persons 'coming in' 'shall be understood of such persons onely, as shall testifei their affections to the parliament by taking the covenant,' so that, as he says in a letter to Lord Devonshire, his remaining abroad was 'upon the same terms' as heretofore. To Henry he writes : 'You know I never was within the king's quarters nor never contributed, or in any way assisted against them : absence is my onely crime, and you know I have highly suffered for that already and was neaver see much as somoned to returne see noe contempt can bee layed to my charge ; neither have I refused to pay taxes.'

Sir Roger Burgoyne writes that he has procured an order 'that the com^{tee} shall certifie the cause of their sequestration wth power to examine witnesses uppon oath . . . if you could procure us certificates of y^r livinge see and see longe in this and that place happily they may be useful to us.'

The sequestration of Claydon appears to have been only absolutely carried out in September '46, though the ordinance was dated '44 in which Sir Ralph had been named a delinquent, and his tenants formally warned that all rents would have to be handed over to the Committee of Sequestration, sitting at Aylesbury. His friends had been able to show that his estate was in the hands of trustees for the payment of 900*l.* a year of debts and annuities, but Roades was compelled to account for all the residue of the rents to the committee. The list of persons mentioned in the Ordinance as liable to be dealt with as delinquents is very comprehensive.

Dr. Denton informs Ralph that the petitions of those who compound have 'this method' running through them all—a declaration that they have assisted the King and therefore that they desire to compound for their delinquency. Without an acknowledgment of delinquency no petition is received. Ralph writes that if the committee will not take off the sequestration he must compound, 'but if they make me petition as others doe that "A. B. humbly sheweth hee hath assisted the king," etc., 'tis a notorious lye, for I never assisted him in my life.' The doctor advises that if he can make some 'steady potent friends,' as Lord Warwick, he believes Ralph may 'gett a dispatch in some reasonable time, but that must be by speciall favour.'

They next discuss whether Mary should go to England alone and look up their friends: a heavy task, but likely to succeed, Sir Roger thinks, 'if shee can bring hir spirit to a soliciting temper and can tell how to use the iuyce of an onion sometimes to soften hard hearts.' Ralph replies: 'I know it is not hard for a wife to dissemble, but there is like to be no need of that, for where necessities are so great the iuyce of an onion will be useless.' Dr. Denton writes: 'I am cleere of opinion the best course y^u can take is to send over Mischeife wth all the speed y^u can, and to place y^r selfe at Deepe, or Calais, or some other maritime towne where y^u may receave an account, and returne answers wth speed concerninge y^r owne businesse; not to touch upon incon-

Jan 15,
1646.

Feb 11,
1646.

Aug. 1646.

veniences of y^r comminge, women were never soe usefull as now, and though y^a should be my agent and sollicitour of all the men I knowe (and therefore much more to be preferred in y^r owne cause) yett I am confident if y^a were here, y^a would doe as our sages doe, instruct y^r wife, and leave her to act it wth committees, their sexe intitles them to many priviledges, and we find the comfort of them more now then ever.'

'The legal question at issue soon made itself clear. The mere absence of a member of Parliament from his duties, even when he had given no assistance to the King, had been declared to be delinquency by an order of the House of Commons, but that order had not been confirmed by the House of Lords. The point to be decided was whether delinquency could be created by anything short of an Ordinance of Parliament. On February 25, 1647, the Committee of Lords and Commons took the preliminary step to bring this question to an issue by ordering the Bucks Committee to make a certificate of the causes of Sir Ralph's delinquency.'¹ But before this Mary had reached England; Sir Ralph wrote to Lord Devonshire that 'unlesse innocency proove a crime, I shall not utterly despaire of a returne.'

Ralph escorts his wife to the coast, and writes from Rouen to Henry: 'Tell your good aunt that Mischeife is coming as soon as wee can finde any tollerable passage from hence to Diepe (by Callais wee durst not goe for the Army is now going into Garrison . . . who Rob by 20 or 30 in a company). Of late the weather hath been wonderfull stormie, and the windes exceeding high, soe that wee must attend for a more quiet season: the marchants and shipmasters heere informe mee that in one stormie (about six weekes since) ther was 42 shippes cast away uppon the coasts of England, therfore wee have reason to bee very wary.' He took all possible care of his beloved 'Mischief,' and was greatly troubled at having to let her make this expedition without him. He wrote special letters of thanks to the two gentlemen to whose

¹ Gardiner's *Great Civil War*, vol. iii. p. 312.

Nov. 13,
1646.

charge he confided her, for their care in 'conducting' her on the journey, and the following note, written near midnight a few days after her departure, shows how keenly he felt the separation: 'My deare Hart, though the winde held fare, and the weather good till Satterday at night, soe that I have all the hopes that can bee of thy saife arrivall, yett I confesse a letter from thee now [Tuesday] to give mee a full assurance would bee more welcome to mee then ever, especially if it tolde every perticuler how thou hast been since I saw thee . . . 'tis now soe exceeding late that I can only intreate thee to bee carefull of thy selfe, and make hast back againe to mee, for the greife of our fatall separation is not to bee expressed by Thy' [unsigned].

Amongst the scraps of manuscript that have come back from Blois to Claydon, and have so long outlasted the hands that traced their now faded characters, are many bits of verse, and songs sung to the guitar. More than one copy has been made of Henry Lawes' exquisite lines 'To his Mistress going to Sea.'¹ They must surely ever after have brought back to Ralph's mind that parting with Mary.

'Fayrewell fayre sainte, may not the seas and winde
Swell like the Hearts and Eyes you leave beehinde,
But calm and gentle like the lookes you weare
Smile in your Face and whisper in your Eare.'

¹ *Ayres and Dialogues*, published 1653.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MARY LADY VERNEY 'SOLICITING.'

1646 1647.

DURING the time that Lady Verney was in England looking after her husband's affairs, they kept up a regular and detailed correspondence, and their letters are among the most interesting of the Verney MSS. The task which she had undertaken was a very difficult one, particularly for a woman, but she applied herself to it with characteristic spirit and tact, and scarcely complained of the troubles she went through, except in so far as they hindered her work. She had to fight with enemies and friends, Lords and Commons, Committees who would not sit, members who would not vote; she had to administer 'French toys' in one direction, a watch in another; and to distribute hard money, on good advice, to the immaculate members and their wives. She had to stand up for her husband's rights against the men who owed him money and would not or could not pay, and his still more numerous creditors. The debts, it must be remembered, were almost all Sir Edmund's, and Sir Ralph had only borrowed in order to pay the interest upon his father's liabilities; yet there is not a line of bitterness and scarcely even any observation of the fact. The revenues of Claydon barely sufficed to pay what was due; but Sir Ralph had taken up the heavy burden without a murmur, and his wife is content to share it with him although they are reduced to living almost entirely on her fortune.

A set of cypher names had been agreed on between husband and wife before they parted and they must have had some amusement in settling them together. Lady

Sussex, now Lady Warwick, was happily described as 'Old men's wife,' Sir Roger Burgoyne as 'Mr. Good,' Henry as 'Lodge,' Fairfax as 'Brave,' Frank Drake as 'Purchase,' Mr. Aris as 'Old Master,' Aunt Fure as 'Emerald,' Roades as 'Will Johnson,' the sequestration and sequestrators are 'Chaine' and 'Chainors,' the covenant is 'Phisick,' money is 'Lead,' property which had shown such an aptitude to fly away appears as 'Feathers,' the Committee of Lords and Commons are 'Freinds Hault et Bas,' the Lords alone 'Hault' and the Commons 'Bas,' the Bucks Committee are 'Hens,' apparently from the name of one of the members; there are also cypher names of places.

Nov. 26,
1646.

Mary 'writt twice from Rie'—and again: 'We are at this very instant safely arrived hear in Southwark, but soe extreemly weary that I can scarce hold my penn. . . . We weare in great fear of being stopped at the gardes, but by very great fortune we passed, not being suspishiously acomodated.' She had been kindly treated at Rye by the Cockrams; he and his wife 'furneshed me with all acomodation both for horses and selfe. I left Sir Edward Herbert and my Lady at Rie. . . . they both came to see me, and told me they wear sorry they mett me nott sooner, to have prevented me, as thinking itt a very unfitt time to doe my business. Really they wear both more curtiuous then ever in theyr lives. . . . I find my change of diett breed a very great allteration in me already, but I hope in God I shall be better when I am settled. I long for nothing more then to hear thou art safe at Bloyse, and wish for noothing in this world soe much as to be with thee againe.'

Dec. 8,
1646.

'Neyther the ayre nor diett agrees with me, butt I shall make all the hast out of itt that I can, though I feare twill be longe first for I find business of this nature are extreemly tedious, but if it pleas God to give me my helth I will nott neglect one minutes time. I have had soe much company every day since I came, that I have nott stirred forth of dores, onely one day to my sister [Susan] Alpott's who made an invitation to me, and a very great dinner. Here hath binn all y^r owne frends and my lady Ann and all y^t family

whoe all carry a mighty faire show to me. . . . Purchase hath allsoe bin heare . . . and will be very cordiall, he never lived att such a heith in his life as he doth now. . . . Here hath bin Mr. Good whoe expresseth more aflection and love to you then tis possible for me to wright, and saith if he had knowne you would have come to the sea side, he would have ventured to have seen you. Truly I think he is a very reall frend, which is a thing very diffecult to find in these times. . . . There is one Mr. Pellum, a lawyer of the Bas. He knows you very well, he is a man of Power and by Emrald's interest in him will doe you very much good. I was at his chamber last night, and his opinion is, you are nott chainable for he saith you were chained onely by an order of the Bas and not by an ordinance, and he assures me a bare order is nott suffitient, having nothing but absence against you, butt others are nott of his opinion. . . . I am att very great charge here, for I pay twelve shilling a week for a chamber for myselfe and another for my mayde twoe pare of staires high, and all fire, candle, washing, breakfast and diet besides; Coaches are most infernett dear, and there is noe stirring forth without one or a chaire, the towne was neavor so full as tis now. I was forced to take up 50*l.* upon Will Johnson and my owne bond; Mr. Lodge procured the mony; 20*l.* of itt was for him to sattisfy soe much of the 100*l.* as was taken up for peggs mariage. Indeed he was very Impatient for itt, and though I knew you did nott promise to pay thatt dept untell the other were sattisfied, yett I thought it was better to doe itt then to anger him toe much, for to say truth he is very kind, and soe is the Dr. and follows your busines very hertily. Emrald is very kind and makes very much of me, indeed I could nott have been soe well any where in this towne. . . . Will Johnson is now in towne and they are ready to teare him in pieces, butt I have told him whosoever suffers, you must be supplied. . . . My deare Roge farwell remember me to my poor children.'

Ralph replies: 'I see you are at a very greate charge, if that make you hast back heather tis well, for I confesse I

Dec. 29,
1646.

shall rejoyce at anything that shall bring thee to me againe, though at present money goes very hardly from mee; but while thou doest stay, loose noe time in thy businesse that soe nearly concernes thee and mee and thine, nor spare anything for thy health. . . . Let me know how every one likes the tokens I sent them. I am sorry you did not put of Sue's invitation, for Feasting agrees not with your condition, being not able to returne the like. Avoyd it hereafter, and make some better use of your freinds love, if it bee possible. Make as few visits, and use as few coaches as you can; for on looseth time, and the other spends money. Rather keepe a good fire, and be merry with your freinds at Home. . . . I am very sorry you have been forced to take upp money already, for though tis hard to get into debt, yet tis much harder to come out of it.' 'Your father [John Blacknall] had an excellent Rule, never to Lend a freind money, nor borrow any of him; I confesse the wisdom of this Maxime is rather to bee applauded then the goodnesse. but had I observed it, certainly it had preserved much unitie in our Family. . . . I heare you grow disorderly, and eate too much Beef and too little potage: Let me intreate you to mend this fault, or else—I'll say noe more. in hast I am Thine owne R. V. . . . Almost all your letters are sealed with severall seales, I pray keepe constantly to one (and tie it to your Arme) that I may see if your letters are opened by the Way.' 'Once more, Deare Hart, let mee begg of thee to dispatch thy businesse quickly, before your freinds affections coole, that thou mayest speedily returne back to him whose love dayly encreaseth, even beyond thy immagenation or the expression of thy most faithfull Ralph Verney.'

Dec. 10,
1646.

Mary writes: 'There canott be any thing donn untell we have a certefycate from the "committee" in the country wherefore you were chained; and then they say we must petition all the freinds hault et bas that posseble we can; and if we can gett off we shall be hapy, elce we shall be referred to Goldsuniths Hall where we must expect nothing but cruelty, and the paing of more lead then I feare we can posseble make. This is the day there of Dr.'s hearing; how

he will come off as yett I know nott. . . . One Satterday last a great many compounded. My Lord of Dorset paid 5,000*l.*, and he presently overed the comittee his wholl estate for 6,000*l.*, they paing his depts. . . . All the fear here now is betweene the Presbetericus and the Independants; they beginn allready to come to the House in tumults. Upon Friday there was a thowsand came downe to the House to demand sixe of their owne men which were comitted, and they were presently released. . . . I am most extreemly weary of this place for hear is noething of frendship left, but all the falceness that can be imagined. Except Mr. Good here hath not been any of that syde, onely once Purchase, whoe is soe fearfull and timerous, that he dares nott look upon those he hath heretofore professed freindship toe. The greatest freyndshepp one can expect from most here is nott to be ones enymic. One Satterday last I was with ye old men's wife whoe used me very cyvelly and enquired very kindly how you did and the children, and alsoe of your estate, butt offered me nothing at all of curtesy, yett I was alone wth her an hower together and urged her a little to itt for I told her very many times that itt was frends which did all, which I doupt was hard to be found and wth out them nothing could be donne. But for al this she did not offer to engadge her selfe for her husband nor any other curtesy. I caried the watch butt brought itt away againe as nott thinking itt fitt to bestow there. I think I shall sell itt for the vallue of therty pistolls. One cheyfe end of my going to her was for y^e wrightings which you apointed me to take out, but the trunk is nott in towne she hath sent for itt, but I fear y^e soe long tareing for itt will be a great prejudice to us. Her mayden daughter [Anne Lee] is extreemly kind to me. I gave her the little boxe. . . . I find she hath nott delt very well by her.'

There is a break of three weeks. Mary has been for ^{JAN. 7,} eighteen days in bed, and much distressed in mind that she ^{1617.} could not proceed with her husband's business. 'I prayse god I am very much better then I was, and my seavor hath left me, onely itt hath brought me soe low that I am not

able to goe twice the lenth of the chamber, and I am soe extreemly opressed with mellencollick that I am almost ready to burst; and, to add to my greater misfortune, my mayde is new fallen sick, soe that I am in soe great a straight thatt I know nott what in the world to doe, for tis a torment to me to have a strainger come neare me, but I trust god will give me patience to beare all these afflictions. Truly Dr hath bin and is very carefull of me.' Lady Dacre's man has been to ask about the money owed by Ralph. 'I have nott any creature to send out to enquire for a ship or any thing else, for Hary's man is such a finecall fellow [like master like man] that he thinks much to be sent forth of any ordinary errant. . . . I had butt £25 of that which we took up, for there was noe sattisfing Hary without £25; truly he was allmost outrageous. . . .' 'Harry is very kind, but yet we have had little short disputes about your estate. . . . All my endeavors are to hansomely putt him from the thoughts of liveing with us; for truly he is at a most mighty heith both in his diett and atendance and all things else; I beleeve he foules more linnen in one week than you doe in three. . . . We are very great, therefore keepe very faire with him, butt yett I find that he is all for his owne ends.'

Again and again Mary expresses her gratitude to Dr. Denton. 'He is onely a little chargable,' and she has to try and keep him from going to many lawyers, who are very dear and not much use, 'for tis nott law now but favour.' She hopes the business of the sequestration may not come before the House of Commons, 'because tis very tedious and very difficult to come off from thence. . . .'

Jan. 14,
1647.

'Now for y^e old men's wife. I sent your letters to her, and her daughter Ane, whoe is very kind, and I dare say loves us, & truly soe is y^e Mother; she came once herselfe to see me since I was sick and hath sent to me very often. Once she sent me a pheasant and 2 bottles of wine; butt, poore woeman, I think she hath made herselfe very poore, & I beleeve hath very little power, for she lives in y^e howse like a stranger, & doth not meddle with anything, onely she

gives toe partes of three of her estate for her diett; her nue husband hath not made her a peny Joynture; neyther did he ever give her anything butt one ring of diomans, nor ever gave y^e Daughter y^e worth of sixe pence; neyther hath she donn any thing at all for her; for if she could but have made up her portion foure or five thousand I could by Mr. Lodge's means have helped to a very great fortune—above three thousand a year, cleare estat—a cousin of yours of your owne name. . . . I neavor wright you noe nues, because I beleeve others doth doe that, and indeed . . . I have nott roome for to tell the cruelltes that are donn, and how barbarous a place this is would take up a greatt deale of paper. . . . Your Lady neighbour at Twyford [Lady Weunnan] is very angry with us becaus we doe nott keepe one of Sir A[lexander] D[enton's] children; but Mist. Is[ham] did answer her very well that we had more need get sombody to keep some of your brothers or sisters. . . . Concerning your removing from the place you are in, I leave itt wholly to thee, for beleeve, my dere hart, soe I have but thy company I care not in what towne itt is or whether I have any other company or nott; for if please god to bring me to thee againe I assure thee itt should be a very strang occasion could evor make me goe from thee againe. I think there could noething come to make me doe itt, for truly, my hart, I find myselfe very unable to beare such a separation. For Mons^r Godbeits' house I doe not like it upon noe termes, for tis very Dull and close and Inconvenient. . . . For my part if pleas god to enable us to keepe a coach I shal like the other place as well. . . . I am most impatient to be with thee, for though everybody here is very jolly, yett I never hadd soe sadd a time in all my life.' 'I fear twill be imposseble to dispatch our Jan. 21, business here time enoughe to come to thee to lye in, the 1647. very thought of which goes to the very soule of me, for to be soe long from thee, and to lye inn without thee, is a greater affliction then I feare I shall be able to beare, but I shall dayly pray for patience. . . .' To this her husband replies: 'I will not say what an affliction tis to mee to bee

absent from thee at that time, but I trust god will give thee both strength & patience & a joyfull deliverance. Pray to him hartily, trust to him confidently & submit to him cheerfully & I will endeavour to do the same, both for what concerns thee & myselfe.' Mary continues her story: 'I pay Emrald £1 a week for diett for my selfe and mayde . . . she would nott name any thing, soe I knew not what to doe; but my brother told me he once mentioned that somme to her, so I bid him offere itt . . . which she took and was very well content. . . . All provisions are most extreemly dear, beef 4^d, veal and mutton 8^d per lb; corn above 8^s the bushel. Fainmin is very much feared. . . . I have now received your letter dated 10th Jan., which, though itt was butt a kind of an angry chiding letter yett I forgive thee, because thou didest nott know how sick I was when I writt that little short letter, or noat, as you call it. . . . I have here at my lodging the trunk . . . and a little black boxe. . . . I find they would be troublesom to y^e old men's wife; she allsoe this day sent me home the black cloth bedd and chayres, and lett me pay for y^e bringing them, which was nott soe hansomly donn.' 'Her daughter hath been extreemly sick of a feaver, & is still very ill; I sent my mayd the other day to see her; & old men's wife sent for her into her & expressed very much kindnes to us both, & sent me word if she could doe me any good in our business she be very ready.'

Jan 28,
1647.

'Here was neavor greater expectation than is now, nor people between more hopes and feares of a nue warr then at the present, and I beleeve will be soe ontell the comis-sioners retourne.'

Feb. 28,
1647.

In February Mary was much hindered in her business as the Committee of Sequestration did not sit for three weeks, and without an order from them she could not get the certificate from the Aylesbury Committee. 'Those villaines in the contry might have given a certifycate, if they had pleased, without putting me to this trouble. . . . In this towne, every one is as much discontented as tis possible. The Butchers have begun the way to all the

rest, for within this toe dayes they all did rise upon the exise man, and Burnt downe the exise howse, and flung the exise money forth into the middle of the street, and they say hurt some of the exise men. The Houses were in much disorder upon this, but dare not hang any of them; they say they will leave them to the law, which cannott hang them, for the law onely makes itt a riott; but they will not take off the exise, and the butchers have all sborne that they will nott kill one bitt of meat ontell tis taken off.' . . . 'The committee in the country are very malicious and extreemly Insolent.'

'Most men tell me they beleeeve you will come off if we gett a faire certiffycate.' 'Sir Richard Pigott sent a very civell message that he was to goe into the country about a fortnight or three weeks hence, but if there was any thing he could serve me in sooner, he would goe downe one purpose. . . . He is chaireman ther, and they say hath great credit amongst them. . . . I meane . . . to goe to him before he goes downe. . . . Indeed I am Impaticat ontell I am with thee; and soe, my Deare Roge, I am confydent thou beleevest of thine owne.'

Ralph writes: 'I pray let noe body (though never soe good friends) see any of my wrightings, but such as I send to you to show, and then only to those I bidd you. . . . I pray tell mee if you burne all my letters after you have fully answered them. . . . my deare, I long to heare of thy goeing abroad, and yet I feare thy goeing out: as thou lovest mee be carefull of thy selfe, and let noe businesse make you neglect your health: nor giving thanks to Our good God that gives us all good things; to whose protection I committ thee, with a confidence that he will free us from the Oppressors Hand, and in his owne time bringe thee saife to Thine owne R. V.'

Anne Hobart is dissatisfied with Sir Ralph's letter about her money matters. 'If she is angry without cause, let her bee pleased at leisure,' he replies. It is fortunate that the 'soliciting' is in Mary's hands and not in his.

'Upon tuesday I went to see the old men's wife, it being

y^e feirst time since my sicknes; she made very much of me; & asked very much after you; but one can neavor find her alone, for her howse is alwayes like a court; before I came away her husband and my lord of holland came in; as soon as my Lo: of Holl: saw me he came to me & asked for you extreemly cyvelly, & told me that al y^e sarvis that lay in his power he would be ready to doe us; but her husband sate like a clowne and sayed noething and yet she told him whoe I was: poore sister Nan is most extreemly sick still and hath every day toe docters wth her; they say she is not in sudaine danger; truly I should be very much greived if pleas god should die, for we should loose a very good frend that loves us; her mother desired very much that you would excuse her y^t she had writ noe oftner to you; but she sayes she loves you as well as ever she did; truly I think she hath not time to wright or doe any thing elce; the howse is bravely furnished wth all her stuff that was you know where: but I beleeve they all thought themselves hapier in the old place; most of y^e old sarvants are wth her still.'

Ralph writes in reply: 'I hope Old men's wife will shew herselfe a freind indeed when time serves and need requires, and I beleeve that Noble Lord her Brother in Law will doe you any service hee can, for hee is a gentleman: but for that Vinaigre Faced fellow her husband, I trust wee shall have noe occation to use him, and I should account it a perticular blessing to dispatch my businesse well, without beeing beholding to him, or any such unworthy & ill-natured creatures.'

April 8,
1647.

Mary writes again: 'I have been twice within this week with y^e old men's wife; she spake to her husband and he was att y^e Comittee for me; therefore I thinke itt would not doe amiss if you writt her thanks; she is now goeing into y^e Country at a place of y^e king's called nonesuch; poore nan is very weake still.' 'You desire to know how old men's wife playes her part, and in your latter letter you say thatt tis nott her husband's bare appearing thatt you shall thank her for; truly then you must nott thank her for any

May 16,
1647.

thing; for butt his promise to be once att the comittee when itt hapned that they did nott sitt thatt day att all; I neavor since I came receaved any curtesie from eyther of them; tis true when I goe to see her she doth aske very kindly after you and after your business; butt thatt is all.'

Sir Ralph writes about the expected baby: 'Have a ^{March 10,} parson ready to christen the childe (any way will satisfye ^{1647.} mee soe it bee christened) the best way to prevent all dainger & avoyde all trouble, will bee to dispatch it [the christening] as soone as it is borne, & that as privately as may bee. Richard is a good name for a boy, & your owne for a girle, but let it not bee Susan's, Thomas' nor my owne I charge you . . . I know not whither god-fathers & godmothers are used now in England; tis noe greate matter if they are not, but if they bec take Harry, Dr. or any other that are next at hand. And let mee intreate you to looke out a carefull rather then a fine nursekeeper, for twill bee impossible for you to bee without one. If you neede 2 take them, spare for noe charge wherein your health is concerned. Bec sure the childe's name bee entred in ye Church booke to prevent all questions heerafter.'

There is a loving dispute between the husband and wife as to the baby's name. Mary writes: 'If itt be a boy ^{March 11,} I am resollved to have itt of thy owne name, therefore I ^{1647.} charge you doe nott contredict itt; but if itt be a gerle I leave it wholly to thee to chuse. . . . I will be governed by thee in anything but the name if it be a boy, for to tell the truth I must have itt have thy name. And for the suddaine crisning I will obay thee, and gett a minester in the howse that will doe itt in the old way, for tis nott the fashion heare to have godfathers or godmothers, butt for the father to bring the child to church and answer for itt. . . . Truly one lives like a heathen in this place; since I have recovered my helth I have gonn to our parrish church, but could neavor but one time get any roomc there for all the money I offered. And eyther I must be at the charge to hire a coach to tye all the churches or else sitt at home; and when one getts roomc one heares a very strange kind of sarvis, and in such a tone

that most people doe noething but laughe at itt. And every-body that receaves must be examined before the elders, whoe they all swere asketh them such questions that would make one blush to relate.'

April 7,
1647.

Ralph replies ' Now for the name. If it bee a girle and that you have noe conceit because the other died, I desire it may bee Mary; but if it bee a boy, in earnest you must not deny mee, let it bee Richard or what you please, except my owne name. Really I shall take it ill if you contradict mee in this. If it bee a soune I trust God will make him a better and a happier man then his father. Now for the Christening. I pray give noe offence to the State; should it bee donn in the old way perhappys it may bring more trouble uppon you then you can immagen, and all to noe purpose, for soe it bee donn with common ordinarie water, and that these words, " I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Sonne, and of the Holy Ghost," bee used with the water, I know the child is well baptised. All the rest is but matter of forme and cerimoney which differs almost in every country, and though I must needs like one forme better then another, yet wee must not bee soe wedded to any thing of that nature, as to breake the union by a needlesse seperation in such indifferent things of the Church. . . . If you cannot have convenient Roome at Church, finde out some convenient oppertunity either at Drs or elsewhere to receive it [the Communion] in some House; and doe it quickly, for you know not how soone you may lye in. My Budd, this is a Greate Worke, therfore chuse a time when you have least Businesse, that you may considder itt more seariously.'

March 25,
1647.

Mary had troubles enough without those that her brothers-in-law made for her, but they leave her very little peace, and just now she writes again: 'Harry and I have had a hotter dispute than evor we had; concerning your not answering his letter; he fell into very high Langguage and sayd you had Injured him very much by delaying him soe. . . . I told him how his letters had miscaried, & that you could not posseble answer sooner, but I had as good have spoken to

the post, for he beleevs nothing of itt. . . . He sayed many bitter things, & I was nott much behind hand with him, & in effect I told him I had suffered all this while, but if itt were to be had I would now have where withall to subsist. Beleeve me there is nothing puts me in soe great Choller as to heare thee taxed, that I know art soe good & Just to all.' 'I know all his kindness to me is butt from the teeth outward.'

It is evident that Henry was no help to his poor sister-in-law in her business, which progressed very slowly, and others with whom she had to deal were equally bad in their way. 'I find Frank Drake to be a very Jack,' she writes; and Ralph speaks of Drake's being in a 'frenzie,' which is an 'ill sign' for their business [he was on the committee in Bucks] 'for what kindness can we expect from such a person as is unwilling to do himself a courtesy lest he should do me a pleasure too.'

Mary did at length obtain the certificate of the cause of sequestration: 'It is for noething but absence . . . They April 1, tell me they beleve itt must be referred to the House before 1647. I can come off cleare . . . It will cost us a great deale of money by the tediousness and delayes that I know we shall find there. Itt cost me now 5/- and 6/- in a morning in coach hier those times that I have gon about itt. I am this day going to Lady Warwick to desire her to speake to her husband to be att the comittee to-morrow, for that is the day that we intend the certificate shall be delivered, & itt may be possible that we may receave advantage by haveing some freinds there . . . for sometimes a few frends with God's blessing will doe things beyond expectation; & I trust God will direct us for the best. I am sertaine he is able to protect us against all their barbarous usage . . . Truly I know not whatt I shall doe for money . . . I am halfe wild that I have noe letters this weeke. My dearest Roge, farwell. I am thine owne for ever. P.S. Dr. Mayerne lives hear in toune; he hath but one daughter which they say is the greatest Mariage in England . . . Hear is a most desperate booke written against taking the Covenant, which

if I can gett I will send you ; itt is ordered to be burnt. It will be a little to bigg to send you by the post.'

March 4,
1647.

Dr. Denton writes to Ralph: 'There is now att Blois Sr Orlando Bridgman his only sonne, a nephewe of his, and one Mr. Fanshawe, all under the tuition of Mr. Cordell . . . Sir Orlando intends within a twelvemonth to send him [his son] to the Universitie at Sameur or Poietou for 2 years, then to Paris, and soe to the Inns of Court . . . Though I know not Sir Orl: his sonne, yet I pray make a visitt to him for his Father's sake, and let me know howe he doth, and if it ly in y^r way to doe him a curtesie I pray be kind to him.'

March 24.
1647.

The good doctor had been trying to find out the reasons which were given for various cases of sequestration. 'There is another, Cooke of Gloucester, who was yesterday freed in the House, if I am not misinformed, whose only fault was that he went a woinge to his mistress att Woodstocke before Eghill fight. I heare also that Mr. Catline (against whom some say nothinge is to be alleadged but absence, some say more) . . . is endcavoringe to take off his sequestration . . . Send me in the next as many arguments as you can for the reason of your travell. If my opinion will goe for any-thinge, I will say enough, that it was requisite and very necessary for her health.'

April 21,
1647.

When Mrs. Eure was leaving town, Ralph is very solicitous for his wife: he proposes that she should send for little Jack and his maid Fudd: 'he will entertaine you and Fud will stay in the House, whilst Luce goes to market. . . . Now I have told you my minde, I leave it wholly to you, doe that which pleaseth you best; and doe not trouble yourselfe for anythinge; what course soever you take (for that little time that you will bee at London) the extraordinary charge will not be considerable, therefore please yourselfe, for contentment I price above any money.' 'The honest Doctor' is with her at least twice a day and is very anxious about her, as she is exceedingly delicate, but on the 3rd of June, 1647, Mary's child was safely born; the Doctor writes to announce the joyful tidings to Ralph, and she adds

in her own hand : ' This is onely to lett you know that I thanke June 3,
god I have a great boy and wish my selfe and boy wth thee. 1647.
I can say noe more'; here Dr. resumes : ' but hath writt
more then I would have had her.' Ralph replies : ' My deare June 20,
Budd, the longer your letters were the more they were 1647.
woont to please mee, but I must confesse the three lines you
writ me at the end of Dr.'s letter dated 3rd June pleased mee
above any that I have yett received from you, because they
assured me of thy safe delivery which is a most unspeakable
blessing to us both ; God make us thankful for it. If the
boye's name is Richard I shall hope he may bee a happy
man ; but if it bee otherwise I will not prophecie his ill-
fortune, but rather pray to God to make him an honest man,
and then he will be happy enough.'

There is great joy in the little house at Blois, but Miss Peg
pouts—she had wanted a sister, and holds boys very cheap !
Master Edmund Verney, aged ten, writes to his mother :
' Madame ma bonne mère. Mad^{lle} ma sœur est extrême-
ment courroucée contre vous par ceque vous avez eu un
garçon et non pas une fille. Je prie continuellement pour
vous comme mon devoir me le commande. Vous baiserez
pour moi Monsieur mon petit frère, Mad^{lle} ma sœur vous
baise humblement les mains quoique vous l'avez grandement
désobligée ; envoyez nous de vos bonnes nouvelles, vous nous
obligerez extrêmement, et moi particulièrement qui demeu-
rerai éternellement comme je suis, Madame ma bonne mère,
votre plus humble serviteur et fils.'

We learn from Lord Fermanagh's pocket-book that Mary
had her way about the baby's name ; he was christened
Ralph on the 17th of June, ' Sir Mun' and Lady War-
wick being sponsors. Ralph the elder is full of tender
anxieties about her : ' I charge you doe not stirr out too June 30,
soone, nor leave off too many cloathes at a time though the 1647.
weather bee hott. When you goe downe about the Inven-
tories I beeloeve twill bee your best way to hier a light
coach and foure horses, and then if you stirr very early you
may sleepe in the coach, dine at Amersham, and lie at your
owne house, and the next day the coach may retorne empty.

Mornings and evenings are cold, therefore prepare for that. If you goe downe on horsback you must lodg by the way if you bee very weary, and that may stay you longer in the country then you intend, which may bee a greate hindrance to my affaires at London; therefore goe by coach though it bee the Dearer way.' He asks if Lord Roscommon has been to see her, inquires after all his Irish friends of the old days, how Lady Barrymore and 'Cousin Maudlin' fare, and also where Mrs. Freake and her husband are (they owe him money upon bond). 'Write not too much till you are well able, least it weary you, but I will not abate you a line heer-after, therefore expect it not. I thanke you for your 3 lines, for they did much satisfie mee, but when you are a little stronger, I shall expect to receive a letter every weeke as longe as two or three pamphlets; but I hope my busnesse will receive a good and speedy conclusion, that you may save this labour, and returne quickly to Thine owne.'

June 24,
1647.

Mary made but a slow recovery and was also anxious about the baby, though he was a fine child at his birth. 'Our poore child was soe extreame sick that every body thought itt would have died, butt now I prayse God tis beyond every bodyes expectation strangely recovered. I entend to send itt downe the beginning of ye next weeke; for my selfe I am soe very weake that ontell yesterday, since I was brought to bed, I have neavor been able to sitt upp an hower at a time; I am so tormented with paines in my head, that if I hold it downe but halfe a quarter of an hower, itt puts me into such sweates that I am not able to endure itt. But yet I trust in God if this paine in my head were but gonne, I should recover my strenth a pace, for the Dr makes me eate good brothe. . . . Truly Sir Roger is very kind, and makes the greatest expressions to you that evor I hard in my life.'

Political matters were now in a strange state. On June 2 a troop of horse commanded by Cornet Joyce had suddenly appeared at Holmby House, and in the name of the army had taken possession of the King. The dissension between the Parliament and the army was at its height; the latter

was advancing upon London, having demanded the expulsion of eleven members. The greatest alarm prevailed in the town. Mary writes that the 'parliment men are very humble, and will speake to one now . . . truly in your wholl life you neavor saw people soe sadd and soe dejected as they are all. Every body flyes out of towne; some say we shall have a nue warr and some say noe . . . that which afrights me most is the delayes that these combustions is like to putt upon our busines, and I confesse that fretts me soe that I scarce injoye a quiett hower. . . . I hope your friend will not any longer account itt a misfortune that he was turned out of the House, for I assure you now tis the greatest honner that can be toe any man, to be one of the ferst chosen members turned out by thes old [? new] ones. You cannott possoble Imagination the change without you saw itt.'

June 17,
1647.

June 24,
1647.

When the baby is three weeks old Mary decides that he shall go to Claydon, and writes to Roades: 'Good Will, upon Tuseday next I intend to send my child to St. Allbanes; the nurse is most extreemly desirous to be att home, soe if you cann possoble I would have you be there one Tuesday night and goe to Tringe on Wednesday. The nurse sayeth her husband hath a very easy-going horse, and she thinks itt will be best for him to carry the child before him upon pillows, becaus she cannott ride between toe panniers and hold the child. When you come there, you will quickly find which will be the best way to carry itt; pray provide for both wayes, and bring a footman to goe by itt. If her husband doth carry the child, she cannott ride behind him, soe you must provide a horse for her; my sister Mary goes downe with them, soe you must bring up a pillion to carry her downe behind you. . . . Pray doe you see that they take a great care of the child, and that they goe very softly, for the weather is very hott; if he carries the child before him itt must be tied about him with a garter, and truly I think itt will be a very good way, for the child will nott endure to be long out of ones armes.'

June 25,
1647.

Ralph writes: 'My dear Budd, . . . Now let me charme you once more about your gadding abroad; truly if you

June 27,
1647.

stir out . . . halfe a minute before doctor give you leave I shall not forgive you.' He begs her to 'give the child no phisick but such as midwives and old women, with the doctor's approbation, doe prescribe; for assure yourselve they by experience know better then any phisition how to treate such infants. I will not now dispute with you about his name, but assure your selfe you shall heare of it at large heerafter . . . I presume you have noe better weather at London then wee have heere, which is nothing but raine, & soe cold that I sometimes call for a fire.'

He then tells her when she goes to Claydon, to 'putt upp all the small things (I meane such as will take noe hurt by moathes, rust, or such like) into some Roome by themselves and bringe the key away with you, for if Will. Roades have the key and that any should aske him for anything there, they would quarrell with him about it; but if you have the key, sure none will be soe impudent as to breake it open.'

July 1,
1647.

Mary is 'still as weak as tis possible for any creature to be.' She tells how she has sent off the baby by the coach to St. Albans, where Roades is to meet him with horses: she is troubled that Ralph 'should think much of his name, for of all names I desired thine, and I trust the Lord will make him a good man, for he hath wonderfully blessed him hether-to, and restored him from death to life beyond all people's imagination; butt itt will cost me a great deale of money, my lieing Inn, both in phisick & attendance for him and me, but my Deare I assure thee tis no small addition to my Illness and weakness thatt I cannot see any hopes or likelyhood of a suddaine dispatch of my busenes. Truly the very thoughts of itt continually afflicts me, for were there a possebillety of doeing any buseness yett, everybody adviseth to see how the armye and parliament agree ferst.'

She had hoped to have taken this time for going down to Claydon, 'but the honest Dr will nott by any meanes suffer me to sturr out of towne untell I have taken a course of phisseck; both he and his wife hath been very earnest with me to come and lie at his howse, but I put itt off as well as I can, for . . . I beleeve . . . twill be much dearer to me.

There is many more very earnest with me to be with them, butt I had much rather be by myselfe ; . . . but I entend as soon as I am able . . . to goe to Claydon & soe to Misterton for a little time, & as I come back to bring my boy Jack with me in hope by that time I may quickly dispatch our busenis & come to thee . . . If I am able to ride a horsback, I will goe the same way that I sent my child, for if I should hier a coach downe itt would cost me a great deale of money. For Sir R. Burgoyne & Dr. Denton's coming over with me, I know they have a mighty mind to itt, butt I know nott whether theyr wives will give them leave or nott. I have hard them both very often wish them selves with you, & Sir Roger did protest to me he . . . would abate his father 500*l.* a yeare of what was tied upon him, soe he might have enough to live with you where you now are, he and his children: but I beleeve his wife would say nay.' Ralph writes back in much distress about her health and the pains in her head: he consulted her French doctor, and if they continued 'hee would have you blooded in the foote . . . You must eate Pottage at Dinner, & but light suppers. This is his advise.'

Dr. Denton writes: 'Landlady is churcht & well, but ^{July 4,} lookes ill enough . . . The differences betweene army and ^{1647.} parliament are yett a riddle to most . . . I cannot divine what will be the issue; you may give some ghesse by the bookes I send you . . . As far as I can looke into a milstone, I guesse that the Independants tooke it ill that they could not sway the House, & now they take this course to purge it of the cheefe Presbeterians, that they may reigne againe.' Ralph in his solitude looked anxiously for news: 'Send me the Moderate Intelligencer weekly, or any of the king's letters or such small things, for wee have noe newes at all here . . . I heare Mr. May the poet hath now printed a booke or two concerning my Lord of Essex and the cronicle of these times; certainly they must needes be worth reading, therefore desire Doctor to buy them for mee & pay him for them. I finde hee is resolved to buy mee the booke of ordinances, therefore you must pay him for that also.' For the payment of his debts he proposes to sell some of his wife's land and give

a rent charge upon Claydon : ' Unless you conceive this way best for yourself & children, do not give way unto it, as your refusall will bee as welcome to mee as your consent.' Though it is only July, he is anxious she should begin buying what she will require and making preparations for a sudden start, that no time may be lost once the business is done : ' y^e winter is coming, nay almost come, and in a little time y^e wayes will bee unpassable by reason of souldiers, & further you shall not take another winter journey : therfore get mee some money quickly from Will Roades, & resolve to come quickly to thine owne.'

July 15,
1647.

By the middle of July Mary writes that she is stronger : ' I have been twice abroad and found noe great inconveniency, only this day I have begun a course of steele, and if I can persuade the Dr. to itt I will end itt, for truly I think good broths and a good diett will doe me more good then phissic, though the honest Dr. will nott beleeve itt, his love to us both makes him have soe much care of me, and I tell him hee has toe much apprehension,—for I prayse God I find myselfe much amended wthin this fortnight, and I doubt nott by God's helpe, butt I shall enjoy my helth againe if I were but soe happy as to be wth thee againe, & tell then I canott be hapy nor I feare helthful, but there is noe hopes of ending our busenes untill the great buseness betweene the armye and the parlyament be ended.' With regard to his proposal about the debts she says, ' I cannott say I dislike the way you propound, becaus as land goes at present I canott propound a better ; butt I must tell you that by that time you have sold my land & that you sell a rent charge of 400*l*. or 500*l*. a yeare out of Claydon, & that you have payed all the annuities which are due yearly to your sisters and others, I cannott see where you will have soe much revenue in present to live on as my owne land was worth, and I confess I should be unwilling to putt myselfe to less than that to live upon, without itt had been to have payed thy owne perticuler depts, & then, beleeve me, I could have suffered anything. For my owne land I confess I should have been very glad to have kept enoughe

of itt to have provided well for my toe yonger boyes and my gerll; but if thatt canott bee, thou mayest as freely dispose of that as of myselfe; but in my opinion whattsoever land you part with, you had much better sell outright then for years.' She thinks it 'full enough' to let the creditors have the land at twenty years' purchase and to pay all the interest too; '. . . Tis onely because you bid me doe itt, that I trouble you with my silly advise, for I am sure thy owne judgement is much better, and what that leades thee toe will please me.'

Before Mary left town she was treated to some ill-behaviour from brother Tom. Early in the year he was very civil, and, to her surprise, presented her with his portrait. 'I have hung itt up in my chamber for the better grace; but I am chidd when I offer to looke on itt; for indeed tis very like him.' Later on matters took a different turn, for Tom, as usual, was in want of money. 'Now I must needs tell you,' she writes, 'that I think you prophesied of your brother Tomes kindness to me, for you told me itt would not last, & to let you see your words prove true I have sent you his letter he writt to me. . . . Y^e other day your Aunt being here she fell a talking of him, and why he was angry with me, soe I told her that this was all y^e cause.'

Feb. 18,
1647.

Tom's elegant epistle was as follows: 'Madam, though not with you in person, yet I heare that I was the subject of your discours yesterday. I must confess it is very long since I saw you, and to long for true and cordiall freinds to be asunder. The breach of friendshipp was on your side (first broke) as (upon a true relation of the busyness) it will appeare. You are noe changeling towards mee; your carriage is one and the same. The french clymate hath not a whitt altered you, but rather made you wors; ffor formerly you could keep councell and not discover the secretts of a letter without the consent of the party which sent it. But since you have spued up your inveterate malice against mee, let mee say with the proverb, divill doe thy worst. . . . Had I had your grant I should (if I could

July 16,
1647.

not otherwise have paid it) have supplicated with my aunt to have allowed it out of her annuity. I pray God that neither you nor yours may be putt to that shift and want, which I am & have been putt to. If it be soe, without doubt God's word will prove true, the which is—what measure is given the same will be given againe—I wish the same may light on you and yours. Hitherto you have done little good; I know not what good you may doe if you live to Methusalem's yeares. I could be very large in my expressions, but I am very willing to leave of here till a second opportunity proffers itself, which will not be long, till you shall know, and all others that will bestow a peny in the reading of it, that you and your husband are both very unkind to' [signature cut out].

July 22,
1647.

Of this insolent letter Mary writes to Ralph: 'My hart, when I concider whoe itt comes from & how basely he hath used thee, I doe nott vallue itt, but ye Dr makes himselfe very mery with itt, and calles me noething but "Divell doe thy worst."' Dr. tells her that ill words from such a fellow are compliments, and says at breakfast, 'Divell, will you give me some toast?' to make her laugh.

Mary's reply was to send Tom back his portrait 'w^{ch} as I heare made him more Blank than all ye letters that I could have sent him.' Ralph compliments her on having stood firm, and says, 'I see you are not to be scolded out of 5*l*. . . . You did very well to return his picture; it seems he persists in his wildness and rails still. God forgive him and turn his heart; keep his letter but doe not answer it.' Mary says of Tom, when she returns again to town some months later: 'I sometimes meet him att your Sisters', and he hath ye confydence to talke to me, but I onely make him a curzy'!

In the beginning of August, Mary at last shakes herself free of Committees and creditors, and gets down to Claydon, where she finds many soldiers, 'God send us well quit of them.' In September she goes to Aunt Eure at Misterton in Leicestershire; she was Aunt Sherard now, but her new name was scarcely yet in use. Mary spent about a month

there—a restful visit which was most acceptable to her. 'Indeed my unkle and aunt are extreame civell onto me and will not suffer me to goe away ontell my buseness enforceth me, and truly both providence and discretion makes me willing to spend thatt little Idle time I have in this place, for in a better woman's company I am certain I cannot spend itt, nor with one that loves me better.' The company at Misterton drink Sir Ralph's health two or three times at every meal!

Sir Roger had advised Mary to petition the Army about the sequestration, but public affairs continued in so unsettled a state that for many weeks it was useless to expect any private business to be attended to. Mary writes rather indignantly that Lady Warwick 'never soe much as sent to enquier after me . . . though she knew I lay in in London and was then in all the troubles when she was glad to runn out of towne.' Her conduct was probably to be explained by her husband's critical position, for in a former letter Mary wrote: 'Lady Warwick's husband is one of them that the armye demande; I hear they are much in disorder in that house.'

Ralph writes that he 'takes it most kindly' that she has never failed in sending her weekly letter since she was in the country, 'for except your selfe, noe earthly thing can be more pleasing and welcome to mee then your letters. It seemes many of the goods I left in severall places are likly to bee lost; let not that trouble you; I thanke God we have enough for our present use, and when we want more I trust God will provide them for us.' Concerning her proposal to give Dr. 20*l*. for her confinement he says: 'Tis much too little; less then Thirty pounds I shall not give him, and were it not for the strange unhappy troubles of these times, and my owne pressing necessity, I should blush to give him this; but you must excuse it to him, and assure him I intended it not as a reward, for twill scarce pay for y^e shooe leather that hee hath worne out in my service, but desire him to accept it till it pleas God to make me more able. If hee should absolutely refuse money

Sept. 26,
1647.

Oct. 10,
1647.

(as I hope hee will not) then you must lay it out in some such plate as you thinke fittest; I thinke six Trencher plates and a paire of little candlesticks (without sockets) of ten pounds, would doe well, but this I leave to your discretion. Some small thing you must give his Wife, and be sure to give his childe somewhat.' 'For your Gittarr, if you have forgot any one lesson, nay if you have not gotten many more then you had, truly I shall breake your Fiddle about your pate, therfore looke to your selfe, and follow it hard, and expect noe mercy in this point.'

Oct. 21,
1647.

Mary writes of her journey from Claydon: 'Yesterday I came very late to town and very weary, for by reason I came all y^e way but sixe miles one horseback . . . and I rid upon a cruell trotting horse to boote: your brother Mun rid before me & brought me as farr as Acton, where I had a coach meet me, and I lay one night by the way at Uxbridge. A coach quite thorough would have cost me a greate deale of money, and I hope after I have a little rerted myselfe, twill doe me noe harme. . . . I am now in my old lodging, but I shall leave itt as soone as I can gett another, because this woman whare I now am will let all her house together, which is toe much for my purse to pay, & beside I know nott what to doe wth itt all. I doubt I shall find itt very sadd being alone these long winter nights & if I should diet wth any body but y^e honnest D^r. I know his wife would take itt extreemely ill, becaus they have been bothe very earnest with me to come to theyr howse, but truly tis soe close and soe ill a place that I feare I should have very little helth in itt, & beside noebody can drive a coach into y^e lane, soe what soever wether comes I must goe trapesing a foote to y^e end of y^e lane & all else that comes to me.' Ralph is much concerned for her lodging: if Aunt Sherard comes to London 'I would gladly have you with her this winter; now days grow short and nights long you will bee too much alone. Were I fully assured you were well and conveniently settled, with good contentment, I should bear your absence with lesse regret.' He hears of many new diseases in London and some say they are infectious—'therefore I pray, nay I charge you (what businesse

soever you have) come not neare any that are sick, but pray for all.' 'The Wayes, the Soldiers, and the Sicknesse' are the standing obstacles to all business and journeys.

In a later letter Mary describes her 'nue lodging at Nov. 4,
1647.
Mrs. Brooks toe doores above y^e Goulden Pleece taverne on ye other side in Charles Street.' She pays the same rent as at the former one, 11s. a week; 'butt here I must find my owne linnen . . . there is butt to roomes of a floore, and I have the dining-room floore, and there is another gentleman w^{ch} hath the floore over my head, which I feare will be a greate inconvenience to me . . . butt they are very good people in y^e howse, and will not take any lodgers butt those they know extreamely well. . . . Aunt Misteiton will nott be in towne this winter, her husband is soo given over to the love of the country . . . I am very much alone these long nights but that doth not at all trouble mee.' 'Our friends and acquaintance is much changed since we left this kingdome, and yet I thank God here is some as loves us hartily still, and that I dare swear doth the honnest Dr., my Aunt Eure, and Sir R. Burgoyne.' One of the creditors, Mrs. Hyde, has been storming at her for payment. 'She was in great collier thatt I did nott lett her have any money . . . she sayed she did beleeve you were sequestred out of pollecy to cheate y^e creditors, & that we lived ourselves . . . I told her if she would undertake to take of y^e sequestration I would undertake . . . she should be payed every farthing of her money and something toe boote. . . . I told her y^e was true, God be thanked, we did live, though twas butt in a poore condition, and that we had feld by y^e plate and stufte that we had sold at this time, and that consydering what fortune I brought I was reduced to a very low condition, living here now wth none butt myselfe and one mayde. . . . After much discourse, she sayed she would be content to abate som of her Interest, but nott all; soo I told her if she and y^e rest knew in how ill a condition your estate was she would be glad they had y^e princeple. Beleeve me I shall nott have one Minute of an howers Contentment, untell thou hast with thee thine owne Mary Verney.'

CHAPTER XXV.

MARY LOSES HER CHILDREN AND WINS HER SUIT.

1647-1648.

March 18,
1647.

THE year 1647 had been one of almost unmixed sadness to the devoted husband and wife, and October found them still divided, with no immediate prospect of reunion. While Mary was doing all the difficult political and financial business in England, which was properly the man's work, Ralph had a heavy task in the care of his children's health and education during their mother's absence, and both gave him no little anxiety. Mary had been much taken up with her new-born baby, 'the lusty boy' she was longing to show her husband, but her heart was full of yearning anxiety about little Mun and Peg at Blois. She had written constantly about their training; she is satisfied that Sir Ralph does not let them learn dancing any longer, 'for 2 or 3 months in the yeare is enough to learne that. I like your motion very well of teaching Mun to sing and play on the gittarr, for tis a great deale of pity he should loose his time now he is soe younge and capable of breeding; we had better spare itt on him heerafter then now. Every body heer hath often told me they much wonder that we make them nott learne all exercises, but I have allwayes tolld them that you have as great a desire they should lerne as anybody can have, if you had money. Truly I see noebody heere that barres themselves of anything. Mun must learn to play the gittarr and singe.' She would like 'the gerle' to learn the lute, but perhaps she is rather too young as yet. 'I am sorry to heare she holds her head soe, butt I hope it will nott now be



Vandyck pinx.

DAME MARY VERNEY (NÉE BLACKNALL).

very long before I am with thee, and then I hope to break her of itt. . . . I trust God will give wherewithall to give them breeding.'

Ralph writes carefully and minutely about the clothes that he and the children require, which poor Mary, ill and distracted with anxieties, has scant leisure to attend to. 'Now let me tell you, ye silke stockinges are good, though much to bigg, but that's noe matter, but the Thred ones have made amends, for they are soe little that they will not come over my Toes; my Foote is bigger then yours, but for your comfort these will neither serve me nor you. As for Mun's gray stockings they are about a handful too short and almost an inch too Little, soe I have layed them upp for your sonn John, and you must buy Mun more. . . . Besse is as well fitted, for Luce sent her 2 paire of Shooes that will come as soon uppon her head as upon her Heeles; soe we laugh at you both.' Mary, in return, sends him directions about the house-keeping: 'You must needs buy some suger both fine and course, and some spice, and a few reasons and currants'; she does not think the children require any more clothes, 'but I think it will be necessary to give faireings to those that you gave unto last yeare.' There is a great annual fair at Blois, and Ralph, as she suggests, buys presents for various neighbours, but when he has done so, he finds he has no money left for the sugars fine and coarse, the raisins and the currants!

He has broken out into hospitality: 'this weeke I made a Huge, Huge, Huge feast, w^{ch} cost me neare 3 pistolls; and treated your Dr, his wife and daughter; the Minister, his wife, brother and daughter, Mons^r. Du Four his wife and sister, Mrs. Pappin and little Bush; in all 12 and your Apricocks went to Pott, therefore come quickly and preserve more.'

Mary's summer visit to Claydon had been a very sad one; to so careful a mistress the state in which she found the place after four years' absence was indeed heart-breaking; she writes to Ralph that 'the house is most lamentably furnished, all the linnen is quite worne out,' . . . 'the

Aug. 11,
1647.

Aug. 3,
1647.

Aug. 10,
1647.

Aug. 18,
1647.

feather bedds that were waled up are much eaten with Ratts' . . . the fire irons, 'spitts and other odd thinges are so extreemly eaten with Rust thatt they cannot be evor of any use againe,' and she will have them sold by weight: 'the cloath of the Musk-coloured stools is spoyled, and the dining-room chairs in Ragges.' Ralph is anxious lest the 'Moathes' should destroy 'the Turkie Worke cushions,' and 'I pray see that the Armes [Sir Edmund's] doe not want cleaning and Oylinge, least they bee spoyled with Rust, for I intend them to Bro: Mun when he gets imployment'; if they are likely to bring any danger on the house they are to be removed from the place where they hang, as he would not risk bringing trouble upon Mun for 'tenne times theire worth'; there are also 'the greate churche cushions' and 'the purple satten ones' to be looked after.

Aug. 4,
1647

The descendants of the 'Ratts' and 'Moathes' still flourish and abound, and rust and damp are time-honoured enemies at Claydon, but the mind of the modern housekeeper refuses to grasp the confusion that must have been brought into a household by the quartering of soldiers upon it during the Civil War. Poor Mary's letters are full of this trouble; there had been constant visits from soldiers during her absence, and when she goes from London to Claydon the country is so full of them that she can scarce get 'a nagg' and has to go round by Berkhamstead. She writes a hurried line on her arrival for the return coach to take back, that Ralph may not be without his letter: 'I am so very weary that I am scarce able to stand upon my legges,' and after describing how difficult she found it to avoid the soldiers on the roads near Uxbridge, says: 'I left them a fighting at 4 a'clock this morning, but I trust in god they are apeased by this time.' She gets a little respite during the month of August, but to her despair, when she has got things into order and is just leaving Claydon for Misterton, a fresh detachment arrives: 'to-morrow I intend to goe, and I shall leave ye house soe full of soldiers, thatt I feare they will make us as poore as beggers; I protest I know nott which way we shall live if the countrey may allwayes quarter

Aug. 31,
1647.

soldiers. . . . I vowe I had much rather live with Bread and water then to be amongst them.'

Mary's time at Claydon was fatiguing and laborious in the extreme; her husband, good as he is to her, and thinking of everything that can concern her comfort, yet has no scruple in overwhelming her with business; she stands about day after day making inventories with Mrs. Alcock, or wading through the endless tangle of their accounts with Will Roades.

'I have spent all this day in searching amongst your papers for the survay you writt for, but canott find it amongst the wrightings that came out of the drawers in your fathers clossett . . . & truly I think I have opened a thousand papers.' The large sheets closely written in her beautiful clear hand attest her industry as a correspondent, and yet Sir Ralph is often unsatisfied; there is something she has not fully explained to his most methodical mind, and he speaks with some severity 'of all those severall perticulers that I have writ to you off in my former letters, & that you have not yet given any answers too. Had I but one letter to write a Weeke, I would not misse answering the least perticuler, but if you cannot answer it presently you commonly forget it, and the reason is, because you will not take a noate of Remembrance.'

Aug. 18,
1647.

She replies very gently: 'My deare, thou doest chide me for nott answering thy letters; truly I am confydent tis by chance if I miss ansering of every perticuler; for I allwayes lay thy letters before me when I wright; butt howeover, when thou considerest how much I wright and how ill a scribe I am, thou oughtest nott to be angry with me for forgetting now and then a little.' 'I assure you,' she says another time, 'I neavor fayed one Thursday of wrighting to you nevor since I came over.'

Nov. 25,
1647.

Everything he requires must be done exactly and immediately; at one time he asks for prescriptions. 'There is an excellent medicine that Mrs. Francis was wont to make for the Canker, twas black & boyled in an Egg shell; I pray take an exact receit both of what and how it is made, and

Feb. 14,
1647.

send it mee as soone as possibly you can.' . . . also 'the receipt of goodwife Greene's medicine for a pinn and webb in the eye (for the other day I feared Munn would have had one) tis made of sowes and severall herbes, and is to bee drunke. parhapps D^r. will laugh at it but I know tis good, and have found it soe myselte. Write it at large, and send it as soon as well you can, ask your D^r^s advise about Pegg, I lay a thicke plaster to her eare made of milke, grated white bread and y^e yolke of an Egg and saffron with oyle of sweet almonds poured uppon it; the D^r. has absolutely forbidden her and Mun to drinke any wine at all, noe not soe much as to discoulour the water; he saies if pegg drinke any wine or eate Frute, her paine cañot bee cured, truly her paine hath soe punished her, that she is very willing to forbear both, but I make her take a litle wine because tis winter, and I would not breake her of it on a suddaine, but within a moneth she shall not have a dropp. . . .' Another time he appeals to Mary's tact and patience to make up a quarrel between Mr. Aris and Will Roades. The relations between the House and the Rectory were wont to be very cordial, but in Sir Ralph's absence there was friction between the rector and the steward—'an inconveniency' that he has long foreseen; he writes about it to Mary: 'If W. R. informe mee rightly old Master [the Rector] doth not use me well, but one tale is good till another is heard, therefore I will not condemne him, but I pray use your best endeavour to make them freinds, or at least to keepe all in quiet till my returne, that I may see where the fault lies; you must mannage this matter very tenderly, for this is a captious age.' Mary replies that his fears are but too well founded: 'I find there is a mortall quarrell between W. R. and old Master; he sayes W. R. was the cause of his imprisonment, and W. R. offers to bring wittness of ye contrary, and doth very much justefye himselte against all that old Master layes to his charge. I never heard them speake together, and before old Master I doe avoyde ye speaking of itt, for,' adds the poor woman wearily, 'I cannot Indure to interest myselte in quarrells.'

Aug. 11,
1647.

Aug. 26,
1647.

Mrs. Rector is still more implacable than her husband:

'I doe not think it possible to reconcile them. . . . I did shun the hearing of the busenesse all ye while I was there, onely by chance one day W. R. came in to speak with me, and old Master's wife being there, she fell soe bitterly upon him that itt was downeright railing. I cannot tell how to judge of the busenesse. I beleeeve W. R. may be in some faulte, but I am sure he had the advantage of her thatt day, for though she gave him very bitter language yett he caried himselfe very handsomely towards her, but they say twass because I was by that he was so temperate. You must know that your bro: Mun and they are very great; and by that meanes I know when they take ill.' Edmund prefers boarding at the Rectory when the house is empty, and they hope that in time he will make peace, though Mr. Aris is inclined to include Sir Ralph in his indignation against the steward.

Sept. 5,
1647.

The neighbours call, and Mary has no time to return their visits; Ralph from Blois, sympathising and advising in all troubles great and small, would have her send Will Roades 'to Sir Richard Pigott, or any other you are obliged unto, to excuse your not waiting uppon their wives; those little incivilities will not hurt you.' She manages to pay a visit to their neighbour at Addington, a lawyer, who had witnessed Sir Edmund's will in 1639, and whom they are consulting upon some of their financial perplexities. 'I was yesterday at Mr Busby's a horsback, and was very wery with thatt little journey. He is very kind to us about that business; he hath a very fine place, and is very proude of it; truly I think he showed me every hole in the howse; I am sure I was hartily weary with walking up and downe; he hath bestowed a very great deale of money upon it.' Mr. Busby is the only prosperous person in the correspondence; and Mary writes again later: 'I spake very hartely to him to meet you, and told him how extreumly joyed you would be to see him . . . butt I doe not find y^e he hath any great Maw to ye journey; he is ritch and fatt, and I dought will be afrayde of hazarding his person . . . if ye times doth nott suddenly mend, he will give over his profession and leave this kingdom, butt yet he sayes att ye present he hath very

Aug. 26,
1647

Dec. 9,
1647.

much practice'; every one is going to law either to claim debts or to protect property. Mary tries to arrange that he should pay them a friendly visit at Blois, and only be paid fees for the business he does with them, and not for his expenses and absence from England. When she is just starting she offers to wait a week or two for him—the greatest compliment, she says, she could pay to any man; but this 'ritch, fatt' man is much less able to encounter a winter journey than she is.

Feb. 10,
1648.

Mr. Busby 'cannot poseble goe with me by reason of the sizes [assizes] and some other occassions of his owne . . . He told me his wife and children was a great tie unto him to keepe him att home . . . I showed him ye letter of atourney too, and he sayes you had better send one thatt is witnessed by some English Menn, for he sayes that noe Jurie heare will vallue this because they understand nott French.'

Among her multifarious business at Claydon Mary had a wedding to arrange for, in which she took the kindest interest. Her housekeeper, Mrs. Frances Allcock, was married to Mr. William Hoare on August 29, 1647, at Middle Claydon Church. The parish register, carefully kept by the Rev. John Aris, shows the troubled state of the times, as from October 18, 1642, to December 19, 1650, no marriage but this one is recorded. The housekeeper and her husband continued to live in the house; Mary gave her the furniture of her room, and Ralph had his say about the most suitable bed and hangings. 'Concerning Mrs. Francis her mariage . . . I writt her word y^t I did beleewe you would give her your consent for to remayne there still, . . . for itt will nott be fitt by noe meanes for Mall & Betty to live at her husband's howse, for he is butt an ordinary Gra-siur & a mean condition man.' Even after her marriage, Frances Allcock continued to be known by her maiden name, and 'the ordinary grazier' was quite ignored by the family.

In her labours and fatigues Mary has one constant source of comfort in the presence of her little John, who never leaves her from the first day of their reunion, and trots

about the house after her singing, and enlivening the dull business of the inventories with his sweet voice and funny sayings. In the first hurried note sent by the return coach on the night of her arrival, she says to Ralph: 'As far as I can tell by candlelight, thy boy Jack appears to me to be a brave lusty boy.' By daylight her anxious inspection of him proved less satisfactory: he was nearly seven, and had suffered in body and mind from his mother's three years' absence. She writes to her husband a few days later.

'I must give thee some account of our own babyes heare. Aug. 10, 1647. For Jack his leggs are most miserable, crooked as ever I saw any child's, and yett thank god he goes very strongly, and is very straye in his body as any child can bee; and is a very fine child all but his legges, and truly I think would be much finer if we had him in ordering, for they lett him eate anythinge that he hath a mind too, and he keepes a very ill diett; he hath an Imperfection in his speech, and of all things he hates his booke, truly tis time you had him with you for he learnes noothing heare. You would be much pleased with his Company, for he is a very ready witted child and is very good company, and is soo fond of the name of his father and mother; he is allwayes with me from the first hower thatt I came, and tells me that he would very layne goe into france to his father; he sings prettely.'

'I long to see poor Jack,' Ralph replies; 'truly the Sept. 5, 1647. Crookednesse of his Leggs grieves my very Hart, aske some advise about it at London, but doe not Tamper with him.' 'Jack is a very gallant boy,' writes Mary, 'butt truly if he Sept. 7, 1647. stay at Claydon a little longer he will be utterly spoyled . . . he hath noe fault in him beside his leggs, for though tis mine owne I must needs say he is an extreame witty child.' To her great comfort it is settled that Jack shall go back with her to France; but there is so much sickness in London that he is not to join her till she is ready to sail.

She has been anxious about Baby Ralph; he got through

his adventurous journey to Claydon without mishap, and Mary wrote about him from London: 'Good Will, I am very glad to heare my Child came soe well home, . . . I wish myselfe hartely there toe. . . . I pray speak to Mrs. Allcock to lett the nurse have a Cradle; one of the worst will sarve her turne and a hard pillow . . . Your frend M. Verney.'

Aug. 10,
1647.

The baby is out at nurse but she constantly sees him; in August she writes to her husband: 'For my little boy Ralph he hath been very ill since I came which has been a great grief to me, butt now I thank God he is reasonable well againe.' She has to change his wet-nurse, and the only fit woman she can find is 'Raph Rodes' wife, and I feare they are but poore and she lookes like a slatterne but she sayeth if she takes the child she will have a mighty care of itt, and truly she hath toe as fine children of her owne as evor I sawe.' The nurse is to have '4^s a week and toe loads of wood; truly tis as little as we can offer her, being she had nott ye cristening, for nurses are much dearer than ever they were . . . poor child I pray god bless him and make him a happy Man, for he hath had butt a troublesom begining, yett I prayse god he thrives well, and is a lovely baby.' 'I meane to coate him this week [he is nearly three months old]. I have had much adoe to keep the nurse quiett so long without coates.' Before she leaves Claydon she is quite comforted about him. 'My little Raphe is a very fine boy, and thrives very well.'

Oct. 1647.

Mary returned to London in October from Misterton, leaving Jack and Ralph at Claydon. 'I am soe weary,' she writes to her husband on the 21st, 'that tis a payne to me to hold ye penn, but yet I cannot conclude, outell I have chidd thee that thou dost never give me an account how thyselfe and boy and gerle have your helthes, and yett I have intreated itt of you before now: tis a duty I weekly performe to thee, and I assure you I expect ye same from you, for my deare hart there is noething in this world soe nearly concernes me. . . . I can not express to thee how sadd a hart I have to think how long tis since I saw thee

and how long twill be before I come to thee,' and again she complains that he tells her everything except what she wants most to know, 'how thy Deare selfe and my children have been.'

The poor mother's instinct did not deceive her; both children were very ailing and little Peg, who was never to learn how to hold up her head in this world, was down with dysentery and fever. Ralph, knowing how she loved her little daughter, had not the courage to tell her of it; he wrote of her sufferings borne with sweet patience to Dr. Denton, but never mentioned them in his letters to Mary; and while she was writing her tender inquiries the child was dying.

'I am soe full of affliction that I can say no more but pray for us,' he wrote to Dr. Denton, and his next letter of the 10th is but a sorrowful fragment: 'Oh Dr. Dr. my poore Peg is happy but I am your most afflicted and unfortunate servant. Tell mee how and when this shall be made knowne to her mother.' He wrote this all unconscious of another loss; the baby had died suddenly at Claydon, and Dr. Denton had a doubly heavy task in breaking the news to his beloved niece. He writes to Ralph of this second sorrow: 'Your own wofull experiences have prepared you for any disasters that any of Job's comforters can present to you, god hath taken away what he gave, I meane your youngest son by convulsion fitts. My wife mett me by the way to let me know soe much and that she had broken it to her. . . . I found her in her bed lamenting and very inquisitive of me alsoe how her children did, expressing that you had sent her noe worde of them for a month or longer. I thought it best to make but one busines of both and soe I lett her know how happy her gerle was. You may better imagine then I can expresse how closely she laies it to her heart, but I hope time with God's blessinge will give her more patience. . . . She talks very earnestly of cominge suddenly to you, which I doe not yett much contradict, but I thinke for the perfecting of her health to perswade her to stay till after Christmas, because

Oct. 8
1647

Oct. 28,
1647.

then the approaching of the sun will make it more seasonable travellinge.'

Oct. 28,
1647.

Mary's sufferings under this double bereavement were terrible. She ends her next letter with a pathetic postscript: 'Since I writt this, I have receaved ye sad nues of toe of our deare children's death, which affliction joynd with being absent from thee is—without god's great marcy to me, a heavier burthen than can be borne by thine owne unhapy M.'

Nov. 1,
1647.

She writes again: 'My dearest hart, I was in soe much affliction for ye losse of my deare children, when the last letters went from hence, that I was nott in a condition to wright or doe anything elce and truly att pressent I am soe weake that I am scarce able to goe upp and downe my chamber butt my trust is in my good God; for he gave them to me and he took them from me, and I hope, and I trust he will in his good time deliver me out of all my troubles and give my mind some quiett and bring me to thee for untell I am with thee I canott take any content in any thing in this world, for the truth is I would nott to gaine ye greatest richness in this world be soe long againe from thee as I have allready beene, butt as soone as I am able to goe abroade I will follow thy buseness night and day, and if please God I may succede in such a way as I shall be advised to take, I shall esteeme itt a most onspeakeable blessing.'

Nov. 4,
1647.

The Doctor writes to Ralph: 'I told you in my last that I had acquainted my Landlady with the death of both her children, which though for the present did much afflict and distract her, soe that she spake idly for two nights and sometimes did not know her frends, yett now I thanke God she is out of her bed againe and looks much better then when she left London. . . . She is discreet and I hope will not in a time when she hath most need of it make the least use of it.'

But it was not the wife's faith and courage that gave way; Ralph himself, usually so collected and reasonable, seems to have lost his head with trouble, and to have

worked himself up to the belief that his death would be the best solution of the family troubles and sorrows; he writes a confused letter to Mary, hinting at his approaching departure from Blois: 'Court Hopes undid my Father and Country hopes (for soe I may call these that we now gape after) are like to undoe me, therefore if you finde you cannot get my businesse heard and determined. . . . let mee know it as soone as may bee, for whatever becomes of mee I will endeavour to avoyd being kept thus in suspense. On Friday last was Twelvemoneth you arrived at London and I have been patient in expectation from Weeke to Weeke and Moneth to Moneth and yet noe good comes.' He desires her (vain command) to hurry the business, that he may have her company again, 'which I desire above all earthly things, but if that cannot bee and that for the good of your selfe, and those few Babes that are left us, wee must still be kept asunder, I tell you true, I have not a Hart to stay heere without you' 'it hath pleased God to provide for my poore sweet girle and I hope hee will soe direct mee in yo disposing of my Boy that this shall not bee for his disadvantage.' To Dr. Denton he is more explicit, in his restless misery.

'D' I have often both seariously and sadly considered the uncertainty of these times, and what course were best for mee to take. I confesse I could never yet tell what was fittest to bee donn, but could I possibly have foreseene the necessity of my Wifes continuance in England and some other things that have befallen mee heere, I thinke I should soone have resolved to have spent this winter in Italy and (unless times mend in England) the next in Turkye, and I doubt not but I could soe order my little Family in this place and myselfe (by changing my name and concealing my condition) in the Jorney, that the charge should noe way exceed what I am necessitated to spend heere. And in my judgement this must needs have proved very advantageous, both to myselfe and Family, for though I had falen in the Voyage I doubt not but my good God both can and will bring mee to his Heavenly rest, whether I dye in the midst of Roome,

Dec 8,
1617.Oct. 27,
1617

or in the deserts of the Heathens. His mercyes are not bound to any climato, the same Sun shines there that does at London, and I know full well hee will afford his providence to Pilgrims as well as Princes. Certainly had this been soe, you need not have imployed either money or Friends to take off sequestration, my Death had conjur'd downe that Devill, and then my Wife and children might have enjoyed my fortune Freely, for Widdowes and Orphans are rarely made Delinquents. Dr I had not troubled you with this discourse, had you not made a question about my comming Over, which of all wayes (as the case stands with mee) I conceive the worst that can bee taken by your most unfortunate friende and servant.'

Dec. 16,
1647.

When poor Mary heard of this extraordinary scheme she seemed to have reached the climax of her troubles. 'I confess I did believe thou hadest hadd other thoughts of me then to think I could brooke such a proposition. Noe my harte you must nott whilst I live have any such designn withoute you resolve to take me along with you, and then live in whatt parte of the world you most fancye. Itt is not the being intrusted with your estate can give me the least sattisfaction. . . . If itt be nott possoble for me to finish your buseness I will leave itt to God's Blessing and the honest Dr's. care. . . . Truly this very notion of yours hath gone soe neare me that I have scarce had one nights rest since I receaved your letter, I had enough upon me before, and I prayse my God that he hath kept my harte from breaking all this while. . . . it cannot be for my good to be heare without thee, nor for your advantage or our toe dear children's to have our smale famlye devided in lower severall places To tell you truth I cannott be any longer from you, therefore I am resollved to stand or fall with you and I begg of thee nott to lett this designn any more enter into your thoughts. . . . I am nott able to say one word more but that at this time there is nott a sadder creature in the world then thine owne Deare M.'

Ralph makes no further allusion to his wild scheme; his subsequent letters are full as before of the practical

consideration of freeing his estate and paying his debts, and he comforts himself by writing Mary long religious letters, expressed with great care. 'Haveing spake thus much of my affaires, I should now conclude, but I am soe full of griefe for the Death of my poore children, that I must needes vent some part of it to thee. What shall I say? for every line, every word and sillable about this businesse, encreaseth both thy sorrows and my owne. Therefore I shall endeavour to leave deploring their losse, for they are most unspeakeable gainers by this Change; and since tis soe (if we did not love our selves much more then them) wee should rather rejoyce at their happinesse, then by repining at the Will of Heaven, pull new Judgments down uppon our owne heads. Tis true they are taken from us (and thats their happinesse); but wee shall goe to them (and that should bee our comfort). And is it not much the better both for us and them, that wee should rather assend to heaven to partake of their perpetuall blisse, then they descend to Earth to share with us our misfortunes. But perhaps you will say wee must passe by the Gates of Death, and lodge in (the common Inn of all mankind) the Grave. Alas, have not all our Fathers, nay and these our beloved children too, Trod in the same pathes, and shall wee feare to follow the stepps of soe many Saints that are gonn before us? Had you but seene with what unparralleld patience poore Pegg bore all her paines, and with what discreation and affection she disposed of her wearing cloathes unto her maide that tended her, and lastly with what admirable cheerfulness and courage desiring prayres to bee made for her, shee peaceably resigned her soule into the hands of him that gave it, I am most confident thou wouldst have learned of this our innocent Babe to bee courageous in all thy conflicts, patient in all thy afflictions, and her example would have taught thee to submitt all things to the good pleasure of God, how nearely soever they concerne thy selfe or mee.'

Doll Leeke feels Peg's death very deeply: 'I could have parted with a lim to have saved hir life God has given you

many troubles, but yet so great a happiness with them in joying the blising of such a wife, that you ought to lesen your greaf to preserve yourself to be a comfort to hir whos consern in this is very high, for I know she had sett hir hart much upon this child.' Doll cannot go to Lady Verney at present on account of a dangerous illness of Lady Gawdy's. 'The doctor was with us and showed me your lettell paper, which truly struk me to the hart.' Ralph is not disposed to receive her condolences very graciously; he is vexed at the pertinacity with which she has demanded the money due to her; 'it was a smale dept,' as Lady Hobart pleaded in her sister's excuse, but 'twas all she had in ye world.'

Dec. 8,
1647.

He writes to his wife: 'You see Dol: L: now writ mee a very kinde letter, the last I had from her was neare a yeare and a quarter since, and much of another straine, farre from any kindnesse I assure you; twas about money Will Roades had not payed just when she sent for it. I gave her no answere to that, nor doe I intend to answere this in hast, unlesse you both advise mee to it, and say in what way I had best doe it, for she feedes mee as men doe Apes, with a Bobb, and a Bitt, and soe you may say on any occasion if you thinke fit.'

Nov. 11,
1647.

Dr. Denton writes: 'Your wife I thanke God is very well . . . she hath not been abroad since I told her of her daughter, but I expect her this hour to come and eat a goose: for all you condemned me to plum pudding and puddle ale, yet I believe landlady will tell you that she hath found good nappy ale to be very comfortable and to fatten her. As for your petition I putt it yesterday into a good hand (Sir G. Lenthall), and I have promised him 40%. and he will give me an account of it very shortly.' A petition is to be presented to the House in the name of 'the Lady Verney, wife to Sir Ralph Verney, that the whole business of the sequestration be referred to a committee of Lords and Commons,' and a few weeks later Dr. Denton writes an account of how it was carried.

Dec. 20,
1647.

'Deare Raphe, I told you in my last that I would drive on the naile furiously, and I have beene as good as my word

for the very next day I drave it beyond all the Pikes of the house against the advice of most. . . . The truth is there was digitus Dei, eminently in it, for beyond all our projects, designs and contrivances, God cast us into a gentlemans hands in the turning of a hand that very morninge, nay that very moment, as he was goinge into the House, that very nobly and handsomely carried it through a very harde chapter, in soe much that some laughed and jeered att mee to thinke how I would be cozened, because that very moment there was high and mighty expectations of Scotch and Army papers ready for readinge, and by the opinion of all it was not in the power of the most eminent leadinge man there, to have promoted it singly and nakedly. But thus it was. Mr. J. Ash, who was by order to bringe in reports from Goldsmiths Hall (our petition beinge in Frank Drakes hands), was moved by him and two more of us in his passage through the Hall that he would sit quiett whilst F. D. moved it which he absolutely denied, but beinge made sensible of the busines, and of the equity and quick dispatch it would receave uppon very easy intreaty, very much like a gentleman undertooke the delivery of it, soe before he sate down in the midst of his business he gott it read, and soe it passed with some, but not much regrett, and yet the House was fuller (about 300) then in a longe time before. . . . We have had some of our good frends with us att dinner, our bellies are full and I have noe more to say. . . .'

Mary writes the same day: 'Our petition is granted and I trust as God hath wonderfully pleased us in itt, soe he will continue his marcye still, and bless our endeavors thatt wee may suddenly dispatch thy busenes which hath cost me many a sadd and tedious hower. Our frends caried in the house to every creatures greate amazement, for twas a mighty full House and att the very same time they had buseness came in of very high concernment, Mr. Selden and Mr. Pierpoint did much discourage us in itt, and sayd twas not posseble to gett itt don, butt yett Mr. Pierpoint did you very good sarvis in itt, and truly Mr. Trevor hath bin hugely much your frend, and soe hath Mr. Knightly and many others that I

canott have time to name. They toe dine with me toe day and some others which y^e doctor sent me word he would bring that wee are much obleged toe. I took up 40*l*. and payed itt the same day, you may Imagination for what and truly I was neavor better contented to pay any money in my life then I was to pay that. . . . I beynn to have a huge content within me to think how suddenly I shall be with thee, and yet beleeve me this toe months I have still to stay heare will appeare to me seavon yeares. Everybody tells me that there is noe question but thou wilt be cleared att ye comittee of Lords and Comons. In the afternoone we goe aboute making of nue frends ; . . . they all tell me we need nott feare a deniall ; but itt may be if we doe not make frends we may be delayed.'

Dec. 28,
1647.

Dr. Denton writes. 'Myne uncle to my greate grieve goeth out of the towne on to-morrow and returns not this fortnight, which hath a little disordred us for the present. Not that (as we hope) we shall have neede of him, but we would have beene armed against any arguments or peevishnes. I know he could and would have done his uttmost to have struck it dead. Though it be a clere case yett it is policy to have most Lords there. Warwick is alsoe out of town.'

Dec 28,
1647.

Mary writes : 'All the Lords that we cann make . . . are out of towne, and tis nessesary we should have as many Lords at the hearing of our busenes as we can gett. . . . You long since bid me advise with the D^r aboute getting leave to travaile . . . I allsoe spake to Mr. Treavor, but he is of opinion that itt is needless to ask itt, for he sayes they nevor call home any private gentleman, and when your sequestration is taken off they canott sequester you againe for the same cause that they have already cleared you, and beside if you have leave itt must be of the House, for the generall nevor doth any such thing as they tell me, and to move such a thing in the house I fear would but rather putt them in mind to call you home, espetially if there be butt such a crabbed peece there as King Arthur, whoe that day our buseness was hard did you all ye mischeyfe he could.

but when he had donn the worst he could he sate him down, and told them that sate by him he had sayed all he could, and to confes truth you were a good Ingenious gentleman. . . . This day I have more of the Parlia : men dine with me, this charge I am forced to be att, butt I hope I shall reape the benefitt ['twas well donn,' says Sir Ralph, for 'sometimes those civillities worke much uppon men.']. . . . Sir R. Burgoyne is come to dine with me too, he laughs at this long letter, and desires to know whether you ever read my letters thorogh.'

At length the case came before the committee, and ^{Jan 5,} Mary's long and difficult task was accomplished—the ^{1648.} sequestration was taken off. She writes the good news to Ralph on 'January ye 6th and twelveday,' 'thy buseness was yesterday donn according to thy hartes desire, and I have this day onely time to tell thee soe . . . Lady Warwick hath at last in some measure playd her parte, butt I putt her soundly to itt for I have bin 4 or 5 times with her this week; her husband was there and brought others with him whoos pressence did much good; I went Immediattly from the Comittee to give her thanks last night, where her hus: was gott home before me soe I gave them both thanks together.' Lady Warwick herself writes: 'your good wife solicitede your busynes with all the care that possibly might be,' and Sir Roger sends the following account: 'The good providence of God hath caused the sunn once more to appeare through the darkest of clouds, and hath afforded us one day of refreshment midst the variety of o' troublesome confusions . . . Yesterday the com^{tee} tooke the business into consideration, wher you had my heart though not my tongue, for that you well know hath little of oratory in it. It pleased God, though not without some difficulty, to put a happy period to that most unhappy business. You had many friends there which I must needs confess did prove themselves so indeed . . . I could not have imagined that so much justice should proceed from some of them, but for this one act they shall have my pardon for all that is parst . . . In generall you are as cleare as our sunn can

Jan. 6,
1648.

make you, and now my life shall be for the future as full of hopes as hitherto of feare . . . Go on deare heart to add life to your intentions and let them turne into resolutions of casting once more an eye upon yo^r unhappy country.' Dr.'s joy is characteristically expressed. 'Hooge Mogen Heeren, A lesser title I cannot give y^e seeinge now y^e are made as free as an Empeior. I will not interrupt y^e joy by relatinge any sad stories of the harde chapter (beyond the imagination of any braines but woodcocks) we yesterday passed through, but the catastrophe made amends for all, & we gott it 11 to 3 or 4, it held 3 houres debate.'

Ralph could not as yet return to England, but the removal of the sequestration put him in a fair way of paying his debts by degrees, and Mary joyfully prepared to rejoin him in France. He sends his cordial thanks to Lady Warwick for her husband's good offices at the committee; and so great is the difference between the man who refuses and the man who grants your request, that the fair-minded and judicious Ralph forgets he had once accounted it a particular blessing to dispatch his business without the assistance of such an unworthy and ill-natured creature; Lord Warwick is no longer 'that Vinaigre-faced fellow'—'He hath ever been a very greate lover of justice, and a shelter to persons in distresse.' Frank Drake, who was 'a very Jack,' is again an excellent good fellow; the sun has come out from behind the clouds and the world is not entirely filled—as it was—by ungrateful friends and unnatural relations. Mary seems to have written a number of her gracious and well-expressed letters to thank all who had helped her with the business that hath cost her 'many a troublesom and many a sadd howr.' Mr. John Ash, in acknowledging one to him, feels that he has 'dunne nothing in the least to bullance soe liberall an expression,' and assures her that no man in the future 'shalbe more ready than himself to doe all Lawfull favoures and civillitys to noble and virtuous Ladys.'

Feb. 10,
1648.

She is winding up the Claydon business. 'I told your Bro: Mun thatt you bid me give him your armes which he was much pleased att and took very kindly'; 'the musk couler

stooles have been putt out to dressing,' and a large mirror has had its quicksilver renewed and the frame regilt.

Ralph had been planning her journey ever since the previous September. 'I expect your sunmons, the winter is come and ye weather soe cold that unlesse you wrapp yourselfe extraordinary warme, I shall welcome you with a good Cudgell. I know you will have a care to keepe Jack from cold, and when you land you must not throw off much, for that Towne [Calais] standing uppon ye seaside is subject to bitter weather.' Mary had been urging him not to leave Blois too soon, as neither the date nor the port of her arrival were settled: 'I know thou wilt have a tedious time of itt to wayt long at Diepe. Itt may be I may wayte att Rie a week for seasonable weather at thatt tim of the yeare which you know is something Blusterous.' Sir Ralph tries to persuade Dr. Denton to accompany her by praising 'the rare effect of a sea vomit.'

Sept. 22,
1647.

Before Mary can leave London, there are 200*l.* of small debts to be paid, besides her husband's larger creditors, and she has also to take a journey into Suffolk to settle money affairs with the Sydenhams. She sends minute directions to Roades for bringing up little Jack, to join her in London. As he will lie but one night on the way, his maid need not come with him; 'I would have John Andrewes or some lustie fellow, come up a foote by your horse to helpe the child if any ocasion should be, and lett him be sett upon a pillow and wrapped extreamly warme with one of the little cradle ruggs and a mantle aboute him.' She also orders him 'a pare of russett shoose pressently, lined with Bais, the sole within the shooc to keepe him warm.'

Feb. 28,
1648.

Ralph had advised her not to bring clothes for the children, 'unless you can have a very great peneworth, for they are ordinarily cheaper heere than with you, and we must take the thriftiest way. Truly Muns masters and books cost me above 20 pistolls a yeare now, and he must have cloathes too'; but Mary is resolved that her husband at least shall be made smart: 'Prethy send me word whether men weare black cloth still there, and how much

will mak you a sute and cloke, for I have a great mind to bring you some over because I know you will rather weare any old rusty thing then bestow a new one upon yourselfe.' Also 'I think you had best take a glove of my boy Mun's and cutt the bigness of itt in paper . . . and I will buy some gloves for him hear.' In a former letter Ralph had playfully teased her for not having worn her new garments: 'Sure you meane to sell them and bring mee a minte of money, or else the vanitie of others hath abated your pride, and theire prodigallity made you miserable. Certainly wee are much of a humour at this time about our cloathes, for did you but see how I am patched upp with old Frippery, you could not but admire it; but I deferre all my bravery till you come (with a minte of money) and then ile make it fly, doe not doubt it.' He desires her to get little presents for all their friends at Blois, 'men, women and children,' and he proposes to purchase some pewter plates, 'they are very much better and cheaper then they are with you: if you send me a pattern I will match them and buy toe dossen more, for I remember mine were handsome and of a good size.'

In contrast to the Verneys' simple way of living, Mary describes how 'Mr. Pierepont is now gon out of toun: he hath bin hear about a fortnight or 3 weeks and hath spent a thousand pound: he keepes a coach and fower footemen and toe gentlemen, beside grooms and porter at his doore and cook and very fine coach and liveries, but the very same man he was at Blois. . . . Mr. Smith is with him still . . . but I beleeve will not travayle with him as he is hard a wooing.' Ralph sends a message to Mr. Pierpoint in February to tell him, 'heere hath beene balls in 14 nights together: if hee please to visit this neglected place . . . the joy of his presence will make the toun forget Lent and give at least as many more.' When Sir Roger writes, 'I breathe not in a French ayre so cannot complement, . . . civility begins to be look't upon as a monster now,' Sir Ralph replies: 'S^r complements are a very cheape commodity, & abound too much in this flourishing climate, but . . . should I live ten

thousand yeares among these pratlinge people, I thanke God I have not soe much courtshipp, nor soe little honesty, as to learne this flattering quallity.' Sir Harry Verney, who was a much better linguist than Sir Ralph ever aspired to be, quoted these lines after reading Sir Ralph's letter :

'Suis-je en état d'entendre ces mots,
Ces vains compliments, protocols des sots,
Où l'on se gêne, où le bon sens expire,
Dans le travail de parler sans rien dire ?'

But Sir Ralph would have gained by a readier use of the tongue of 'these pratlinge people,' as he and his wife constantly needed an interpreter ; Mary writes about their meeting, 'As for your onely oficer Jaques truly I think you had best bring him to Roane with you for being we have none with us thatt can speake the Language he will be very usefull to us and necessary and itt is nott much more time that Mun and Bess will be without him, for I suppose we shall nott stay very long at Roane ; I confess I could wish my deare Boy Mun might come along with you toe, butt I dare nott bid you Bring him, for feare itt may prove a prejudice to him for his book, butt truly I long to see him.' Mary is delighted with a letter of little Mun's to Dr. Denton, which he has taken great pains with and written twice over ; the busy physician made time to reply and 'Mun jumped at his letter—he is very proud of itt.'

Week after week goes by and Mary is still waiting for money and to wind up the business of the Marshalsea. 'The times are like to be worse than evor they were, itt was a strang Blessing to us thatt we gott our buseness down in thatt Nick of time for to Men's apreheusions we have gon through impossibilieties ; butt God is strongest when we have least hope.' The exchange is bad, and she is told it will be more to her husband's advantage to carry their money in gold about her person, but she will not do it without his advice, so great is the danger of being robbed : she has a great deal of miscellaneous luggage, a store of oatmeal, the great looking-

glass about which Ralph had sent many careful directions, and in addition she writes to Roades: 'I would very faine have a hansome Mastif Dogg, I pray enquier out one, it must be a very large and quiett Dogg.' She gets her heavy luggage off first and sends her husband the list of it: '4 greate Bundles, 2 trunks one Boxe, one looking glass in a case of Deale Bourds, 2 flatt Basketts tied together, and one hamper, in all ten parcells . . . and I am soe weary this day with rising betimes and sending them out of the house that I know nott what to doe with my selfe.' She desires him to bring with him to meet her in Paris her 'Black silke gowne' and Kirtle thatt is in my greate trunk in my closet, pray doe nott forgett it.'

Jan. 20,
1648.

Mary had one more social duty to perform. She was 'the cheyfe guest' in January 'att the honnest Dr^s, att his wife's eldest daughter's wedding, whoe is married to Mr. Gape the apothicary . . . there is none of Dr^s kindred there, butt myselfe and Frank Drake [married to Elizabeth Denton] and uncle John Denton.' Mary had nearly ended her long letter; she adds a line that she has found a letter of Ralph's awaiting her 'att the wedding house,' and that she will make 'all the hast to thee I can possibly.' Two of the guests add merry postscripts to Ralph: 'S^r I will mak so much of youre Lady that I will not leave one bitt of her for you yet I am, y^r faithfull sarvant F. D.' About a fortnight later the apothecary entertains them all, not a little proud to receive the King's physician, and his other distinguished guests. 'Hear is a little hundred of us,' writes Mary, 'a house warming at my Aunt Dr^s daughter's howse—where thou art wished, but I wish myselfe with thee which wish I trust in God I shall suddainly have.' 'Vallentines day ye 14 feb. 1647.' Dr. Denton adds a postscript: 'We are all a house-warming and you must not expect much.'

Mary had sent him much less happy accounts of another *ménage* in the family: 'Your Cousseu James Fines and his wife are parted; and they say the reason is because they canott agree in disputes of Conscience; and thatt she doth nott think him holy enough; butt in my

opinion there is very little Conscience in parting from their husbands.'

Sir Roger is full of sorrow at Lady Verney's departure; and writes that he 'might enter into a discourse fitt to be cladd with the most sable expressions; . . . the libertie I have for the present of waiting upon your second selfe (though in all other respects I may truly say she is *nulli secunda*) affordes the greatest contentment I can be now capable of, but alas! shee is to be gon. . . . By this meanes I am deprived of that society which so sweetly resembles yourselfe, but heere must I give myselfe the check; it is not mine but y^r happiness that I desire, and so shall it be a pleasure to me to be miserable.' Dieppe is the best place for combs; he begs that Ralph will buy him a couple, 'one of bone, y^e other of torteshell.'

There had been some talk of Mary's bringing Margaret and Mary Eure under her charge to Blois, but Ralph opposed it: no little girle can take Peg's place. 'It would renew your greife, and breake my hart, for I confesse noe creature knew how much you loved that poore childe. I ever concealed what passion I had for her, and rather appeared to neglect her, least our over fondnesse should spoyle her, or make the others jellous; but I must needes say, I loved her at least equall too (if not above) any childe I had, and truly she deserved it, for there was never a better, nor more patient Babby borne. Till now I never knew what a greife it was to part with a childe. Enough of this, least in Venting my owne, I encrease thy sorrow.' Mary writes to him of the presents she is making to relations before leaving England—'if you have enough of my deare girles haire to make brace-letts I know you could nott send a more acceptable thing then every one of your sisters a bracelett.' Aunt Sherard April 4, 1648. gives Mary a commission at the last moment: 'if the fat sweetmeat woman coms to you . . . pray will you ask her for 40^s w^{ch} I lent her.'

A pass was thought needless, but Ralph, in his anxiety for his wife's safety, desired her to get one. She writes that at her request three Parliament men wrote to the Speaker

for one, but he was very angry and refused. She has to delay her journey again, having such a 'miserable fitt of the stone' that she is scarcely able to stand, and Dr. Denton will not let her travel. She is very sorry that Ralph went to Dieppe so soon. 'My boy Jack is now heare and very well I prayse God, and I trust in God I shall bring him safe to thee.' She is much troubled that a coach to Rye would cost 7*l.*, she hopes if she has 'helth enough to ride on horseback and I hope I shall carry my boy Jack sayfe and Lapp him up warm. . . . My dearest Roge itt joyes my hart to think how soone I shall be wth thee. . . . I am for ever thine owne.' She is making anxious inquiries about the hazards at sea; in the Channell 'scarce a friggott passes without being robbed.' 'I leave it to you to choose your owne Way,' says Sir Ralph, 'either by Dover, or Rye, but if you come by Rye, you must look well to your shipping; perhapps some of the Parliament shippes (for the Winter Guard) may lie uppon that Coast, if it were soe tis best coming in one of them, though it cost you double, or if you could watch a Time when some marchants shippes come to Diepe or Havre de Grace, you might goe lie at Dover or the Downes, and soe come in ye Convoy; but this is somewhat an uncertaine Way.'

'Mun is very observant to me in all things,' Mary writes, 'but as for Harry, I have a worse opinion of him than I have roome in this paper to express.' He offers to accompany her to France, which she does not in the least wish. Sir Ralph writes: 'If he still speake of a jorney you know whither, rather Laugh at him for it, then contradict him in it; for wee are apt to doe all that is forbidd us.' Mun is far more considerate. 'Your Bro: Munn will carry me to the sea-syde and I beleeve a very smale invitation would make him stepp over to you, but I believe he thiinks itt would be a charge to you which keeps him from desiring it.' He eventually reached Paris before her, on his own business.

Sir Ralph is waiting in Paris to make sure of meeting his wife at the earliest possible moment. She writes about the 'very many shipps cast away' by recent bad weather,

but that the very thought of being with him 'hath already made me one inch fatter than I was.'

At length, on April 10, 1648, husband and wife were reunited. Dr. Denton writes lamentably to Ralph of the loss of her company; he had intended to go with her to the coast, but his child's sudden illness and his wife's 'whinnelling' (Mary says her jealousy) stopped him; 'she will as soone give him leave to goe to Jerusalem, but you know what tis to be bound to a wife, and though you doe not,' she adds merrily, 'yett he must obey.' Doctor says, 'I have with much regrett (pardon my passion for her, for if she be soe worthy of y^r love, y^u cannot blame me if I thinke her soe of mine) returned y^r Jewell. . . . I wish you both and yours all happinesse that Heaven and Earth can contribute, and that God would . . . in his owne due time . . . bringe you all safe home to the inheritance of your flathers. . . . I am glad she is gone soe well, for after her lyinge in . . . she looked worse than old Dr^r Bethun, just like death. . . . I shall want [miss] her here to helpe sollicite, to rost me apples, and provide me bread and sassage and make pottago, and above all her good company, w^{ch} I would envy anybody but y^r selfe.'

April 10,
1648.

He suggests that Ralph should 'give high and mighty thanks,' to Frank Drake, 'for his care of your businesse. Y^u might doe well also to send his wife some pretty ffrench toyes, . . . fitt things to please and reconcile Babies. . . . Make yourselfe as merry as you list with my gowne, mittens, and girdle [which Mary wore in making bread for him]. . . . I will allow you to laugh as long as you will allow me to eat, and I am resolved to spoile the jest and eat lustily at your cost. . . . I have not eat one morsell of good bread since Mischief went. . . . Tell her that Pragmaticus is for her owne proper use and not for yours, without a capp and a knee and a kisse for me.'

After all her labour, fatigue, and suffering, it is a comfort to think that Mary was restored to her beloved Ralph. She had done her part like a noble woman, simply, cheerfully, with untiring energy, capability, and patience. Every one

seemed to feel the charm of her bright, clever, loving presence. A thorough lady, it was quite indifferent to her whether she received her guests in her old stuff gown, or in the white and blue satin and pearls of her Vandyke picture; whether waited upon by her one maid and cooked for by the lodging-house keeper, or as in the old days with all the advantages of Sir Edmund's Court background and the large establishment at Claydon. She had succeeded in everything; indeed, she was not a woman to fail, but it had been done at the cost of a delicate body, and a very sensitive mind, and the effects of the strain were, unhappily, destined to shorten her life

CHAPTER XXVI.

‘SIR MUN’ IS TREACHEROUSLY SLAIN.

1644-1649.

SIR ALEXANDER DENTON wrote to Ralph, in March 1644, ‘My nephewe Sir Edmund Verney is knighted, his Collonell was taken prisoner, nowe in the tower, and he escaped narrowlye.’ An entry in an old note book tells us that on the 24th of the same month ‘Edmund Verney was Lieut^t-Govern^r of Chester.’ After this he appears as ‘Sir Mun’ in the family correspondence; Will Roades mentions with great respect that he spoke ‘with him whom was usually called Mr. Mun: who is now Sir Edmund.’

In April 1645 Chester was besieged by the parliamentary forces; in May, however, the King marched from Oxford with 10,000 men, and raised the siege; it was one of his last advantages and the very crisis of the Civil War, for in June he was disastrously defeated at Naseby.

Edmund writes to Lord Ormonde, nine days after the news reached Chester: ‘I wayted on his Maj^{ty} hoping to have receivd hiss commands, and soe immedyetely to have come for Ireland. My Lord Byron wass pleas’d to importune me to continue with him in Chester, and to move the King to write to your Exc^{ly} that it wass by hiss command, and to desire you would send me over a regiment of the first men that came over, and thiss letter Sr Robert Byron hath to bring with him. I have alwayes found my Lord Byron very noble to me, and therefore could not in gratitude but obey hiss commands, which are yet but temporary, that iss untill he should be more firmly settled in these parts and in a better condition than he now iss. I much doubt if your

Exc^{ly} should send me a regiment, it might extreemely prejudice my farr more earnest desires, which are wholly bent to settle in some place where I may be a constant attendant on your Exc^{ly}. You are the loadstone that may draw me all over the world, and I am in paine untill I am with you; and therefore would not willingly take any engagement on me that might engage my longer continuance here then the necessity of my Lord Byron's affayres require. The newes for the present iss very ill on the king's part; there are soe many passing over that are able to informe your Exc^{ty} at large that I shall not, etc.'

Nov. 27,
1645.

Chester was again invested; it was of importance to Charles to retain possession of the place as a port of communication with Ireland. The Parliamentary troops under General Poyntz defeated the King before the walls, on which is still shown the seat whence he saw the fight. The town, however, still held out gallantly, and Henry wrote to Ralph, 'I can assure you Sr Mun is well, for in less than this fortnight Doll had a letter from him, a speakes not a word of his beinge married, though most here thinke it. Chester is certainly very much straitened, and if not suddenly relieved doubtless will be lost.' By Christmas 'the garrison was in great want,' but the final surrender did not come till February 3, '46, after a most brave defence. 'Honourable conditions were granted to the garrison,' said Henry, 'except to the native Irish. . . . Sir Mun is well and marcht, as I hear, with the rest.'

Feb. 26,
1647.

Edmund immediately joined the Lord-Lieutenant at Dublin, who was endeavouring to combine with the Confederate Catholics; through all this trying and dangerous year Edmund was by his side.

Mary writes from London to Ralph: 'I hear Brother Mun stayes with my Lo: Ormond, and is resolved to runn the same course thatt he doth. He lately writt to Doll Leeke and his sisters and others; certainly he thinks we are in some new fownd land, which may be beyond the reach of Letters. . . . Tis thought he cannott apeare heare by reason they are very bitter against him of this side; neyther could



Egmont, p.m.

SIR EDMUND VERNEY, KT., THE YOUNGER

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he live here without good allowance, there nott being a possebilletye of his haveing any imployment heare. . . . The Doctor is very much for him and doth beleve he loves you more hartely then any of the rest doth, which I thinke he may easely doe.' Ralph replies: 'If you happen to see my Lord Rossecommon, present my most humble servise to him; aske for Munn, but doe not expresse to him or any other, that you take any thing unkindly from Munn, but rather incourage him in the way hee is in. For my part I expect not to heare from him till hee hath need of mee; many of my freinds have served mee soe already, therefore I expect noe better usage from him nor them.' A reproach that Mun deserved least of all men; but, as Sir Ralph said of himself, his continual troubles made all things seem sad and black to him.

In June, Edmund wrote that he was about to leave Ireland and should probably go to France. 'I could not,' he says, 'write to any freinde I had till the wayes were open by a treaty.' He speaks with enthusiastic devotion of his leader; 'he iss ass noble a gentleman ass ever the world bredd; I have received infinite obligations from hiss Lo^{pp}; wee have the honour, and I beleve it iss the greatest of our honours, to be neare allyde to him by hiss mother.'¹ He hopes that Ralph will wait upon him if ever chance brings them together. 'I am confident you will readily conclude him the noblest and the gallantest gentleman that ever your eyes beheld. I heare your lands are sequesterd, I am heartily sorry for it. I'll deale truely with you, before I hearde thiss I could not beleve you would have suffered by them. For my own part I have ever beene a declared enemy to them, and till the King declare them his freindes I shall continue soe, whatever I suffer by it; but howsoever your opinion & mine may differ in thiss, yet I beseech you let uss remember wee are brethren and love one another heartily.'

The next letter is from Bristol: 'I am come unto

Aug.
1647.

¹ Sir Edmund's aunt married Sir Nicholas Poyntz; Lady Ormonde was daughter of a later Sir John Poyntz.

England upon my Lord of Ormond's artickles, and have been thinking how to get suddainely out of it againe, for I finde my sworde must be my best livelyhood, but I cannot put my selfe into a posture of travailing till I have contriv'd some way how to put mony into my purse. . . . I find thiss kingdome in a strange condition, and very greate probabilityes of a warr to ensue, and yet ncither party going the way that I can either in honour or conscience take part with, for I hold fast to my first principles.' He then goes on to ask if Ralph will buy of him the 50%. annuity which he is under the belief his father left him. 'You shall set your own price. . . . God send a lasting and an hon^{ble} peace in thiss distracted kingdome, though the greatest benefitt I can hope to reape by it iss that it will proove soe to my freindes, for I never looke to see it again after thiss time's departure.'

Aug 10,
1647.

He who had formerly liked so much to go 'handsomely clad' is now sadly reduced in his wardrobe, and Dr. Denton, who loved him dearly, writes that 'poore shabby Mun . . . hath neyther cloathes to his back nor money in his purse, and is neyther able to live in this town, nor able to set foot out of it, except somebody relieve him, and if I cannot or doe not, I doe not know who will here; by which I see that bare worth and honour will give noc man bread. . . . He is very hasty to be gone beyond sea to get his living by that that he is a great master of—his sword.'

Aug. 26,
1647.

Ralph had allowed Mun and Henry to divide Sir Edmund's fine clothes, including: 'A scarlet coat laced round and in every seame with 2 gold and silver laces and black silk, and set thick with great gold and silver buttons and loops.' Henry had, characteristically, appropriated the best of them; Mun says, 'he was very partyale in his dividing of the cloathes, but I did not take notice of it to him.' Edmund could hardly contrive even to ride down to Claydon, and not having received an answer to his former letter asks again if Ralph would buy the annuity. 'I know there have been some misunderstandings between uss, and that you seen'd much

concern'd for a letter I should write to you in the beginning of these unhappy times ; I wass never yet soe wary ass to keepe a copy of any thing I writt [unlike his brother!] neither iss my memory apt to prompt me in what I did soe long agoe, only thiss I can say, I might take occasion upon some precedent letter of my father's to me to write my mind and opinion freely to you, and if it savoured too much of bitternesse I earnestly desire you would impute it to my want of better rhetoricke.'

When the misunderstanding about Edmund's allowance was cleared up, he was on the old intimate terms with Mary. He spent some days at Claydon in the 'unspeakable happiness of her company,' and when the baby boy died he wrote to Ralph a letter of 'most deare and passionate affection.' Ralph contrives to help him, and his gratitude is heartfelt. 'I must either be worse than an infidell or else these kindnesses must strangely oblige me to you.'

His affectionate words are a great comfort to poor exiled Ralph, 'reviving my sadd and drooping spirits,' then sorely tried by the unnatural behaviour of his other two brothers, who, he declares, have 'cast him off.' Edmund would gladly have put things right betwixt him and Henry had that been possible. 'For the elder [Tom] hiss wayes and courses have not only made him ass a stranger to hiss own family, but allmost to all gentlemen.'

Edmund spent the autumn between Claydon—that home for the destitute—his aunt Eure's, and other visits, with constant letters to Ralph and his wife, which, he says, 'have Dec. 19, been a happinesse denied him in the past five years.' He 1647 writes from Stapleford, 'My obligations in thiss place have been soe high that I am obliged to spend most of thiss day in making my acknowledgement of the civilties received.' The charming young soldier was evidently made much of—'to tell you the trueth I stay from church thiss morning to write, and unlesse the parson be very long winded I shall scarce have time to make an ende of all my letters.'

At length the accounts between the brothers were finally Jan. 1648. drawn up by Uncle John Denton setting 'accordinge to the

Feb. 24,
1648.

old sayinge the Hare's heade agaynst the Goose giblets'; all that he considered due to Mun, Sir Ralph paid and more. Mun wished to escort Mary back, but he had to depart earlier, as there was some mysterious business going on for the King's service, to which he scarcely dared to allude. Mary writes: 'I have soe much company heare now to take their leaves of Mun thatt I cannott say more. . . . He hath much business to doe before he goes.'

They met at Paris soon after, Edmund turning up at St. Germain, where the Marquis of Ormonde had joined the Queen and Prince of Wales, and efforts were being redoubled in the King's favour; the Prince was to put himself at the head of that part of the fleet which was loyal, and Ormonde had been invited by the Confederate Catholics to return to Ireland; Edmund was to accompany him.

April 20,
1648.

Meanwhile a great deal of painful private business fell to his share. Tom had got into one of his worst scrapes, signing a bill of exchange belonging to Sir Thomas Elmes, who had lately married his sister Margaret, to whom he behaved very ill; Doctor Denton wrote that Tom was 'in danger of hanging in Paris and of the pillory in London.' He would not, however, stir from France without being bought off by Ralph, who employed a friendly Doctor Kirton to treat with him, while Edmund had to use all his eloquence to persuade the scapegrace to go home. 'I am hugely affrayd he will linger and bee caught by justice.' Doctor Denton, who had no scruples in alarming his friends, observes, 'I heere Tom Elmes is in Paris, w^{ch} I am much troubled at, for I doubt Mun will have him by the eares (and truly if he would crop them and slit his nose I should not be overmuch troubled), and I doubt be the death of him if he give him noe better satisfaction concerning Pegge, and I should be very loathe that he should have his hands in blood, and so I have sent him word.' Edmund, however, was a better diplomatist than his uncle. Margaret had a high temper, and seems to have returned her husband's ill words in the same coin, 'but Mun so carried matters' with his quiet firmness and gentle determination, that he secured

some sort of consideration for his sister from his very unpleasant brother-in-law, and sent him back to England to meet his wife in tolerable humour. 'I am now charming Pegge all I can,' he writes, 'concerning her behaviour to her husband.' 'Sir Edmund managed that business gallantly and handsomely,' remarked old Doctor Kirton, admiringly.

One of Henrietta Maria's maids of honour was Mistress Mary, sister of Sir Thomas Gardiner, who had married Mun's sister Cary. She had evidently a tenderness for the gallant young soldier, and gives him messages to write to Lady Verney: 'Mistress Gardiner much laments her misfortune in not kissing your hands; she sends her service to you and my brother, would have written, butt that it iss Communion day and she receives.' Mary Gardiner herself writes smart little ill-spelt notes, tied up with two bits of floss silk, each carefully sealed. 'I must bege so much of the justis of your Natoure to believe it was a very gret misfortune that I did not se you—I did in dever it as much as was posabell; but the Princ his going a way, left us no mones of storing any ware, for he did not leve but only the Quenes coches.' Aug. 2,
1648.

The merciless conduct of Parliament to Sir Ralph had made no difference in his opinions; neither he nor his wife 'font leur cour' to Henrietta Maria on any of their visits to Paris, so that 'Mistress Mary' may have had real difficulty in bringing the Queen's 'coch' to the Verncys' door; while the Gardiners had behaved so unkindly to Cary when she was left a widow, that Ralph had no very great desire for the company of the maid of honour, who was inclined to dabble in the intrigues of the little court at the Louvre. She afterwards married Sir Henry Wood.

The negotiations in favour of the King lingered long. Edmund, still at 'S^t Jermynes,' writes to Lady Verney at Blois: 'I have wysely, though not pollitickely, placed all my happinesse in attending you—wisely in reguarde it would give me the truest and most vallued content, but impollitickly in reguarde it iss soe dissonant to my fortunes and my wandring profession that I am not allowed soe much ass hopes of enjoying it. My joyes are momentary and come July 23,
1648.

ass it were to swell my afflictions, for Suckling tells us truly, pryvation iss a missery ass much above bare wretchednesse ass that is short of happinesse. I have experimentally founde it ever since you left Paris, and yet I find a strange pleasure in thiss discontentednesse, because it iss so evident an argument of the vallue I have for you. . . . I shall never esteeme any person in the worlde above you. . . My service to little Wagge' [his nephew].

Sept. 20,
1648.

Mun had better intelligence of public events than Ralph, and in his letters he often passes on the latest news from England. He joins Lord Ormonde at Havre, hoping to find 'my lady Marquese, but as she resolves to stay in thiss kingdome [France] till it be knowne what will become of our Irish affayres,' he goes to kiss her hand at Caen, which takes him a week there and back, some fifty miles. 'My Lord Lieutenant undertooke the lyke journey . . . & most narrowly escaped drowning. He had some 8 or 10 leagues to come by water, & an ignorant seaman coming before the tyde served him, splitt his boate against the ground; my Lord was a greate part of him under water, but with much a doe got into a small cocke-boate, in which he rowed about all night, expecting to be cast away every minute, the waves beating into the boate, but by God's mercy is brought safe to land this morning; I have been with him above this houre.'

Sept. 16,
1648.

When the sequestration was removed, the first money which Ralph received—little enough for his own necessities—was employed in assisting his brother. 'I am very sensible,' replies Edmund, 'of the charge I put you to, and your noble and free way of parting with the money. I confesse I receive not any thing from you but with a trouble, and that I would rather be out of the world than continue chargeable to you. I hope the way I am now going will eyther mend my condition or end me.' 'Havre.—The Prince of Wales and all hiss fleete are gone for Holland to victual themselves, and my L^d Warwicke with about 17 shipps came into the Downs last night. Though victualing iss reported to be the cause of the Prince hiss drawing

into Holland, yet I doubt he wass perswaded not to stand Warwicke, ass being thought too weake, for he hath not above 4 tall shippes, the rest are frigots and small vessels. . . . Wee cannot passe into Ireland now without great danger by reason of my L^d of Warwicke, and woe be to us if we are taken, but I hope better fortunes are decreede for uss. Wee have a gallant vessell with 36 gunnes and shall be well manned, and if wee are not very much over matched shall fight hard before wee give ourselves up. I believe this totall defeate of the Scotts has put the queene, Prince, and all theire Councell soe much to theire witts' end that they know not which way to turne themselves now. I spake with Sir Baldwyne Wake, who came lately from the Prince, and reports it wass really beleev'd that the Prince should have been marryed to Duke Hambleton's daughter.' 'There iss noe jealousy of duke hamilton's betraying the army, but lieuet. : generall Bayly who gave up the foote iss much talked of, and duke hamilton's courage somewhat questioned. The Scotts are in trueth but in a sadd condition. . . . God send them better fortune, even to the downefall of our present Tyrants, for whyle they reigne England can never be happy. . . . I am of opinion if wee can by any meanes settle Ireland I shall be in England with men next spring.'

Sept. 20,
1648.

Colchester had been captured by Fairfax, and Edmund was horrified to hear that 'they had been so inhumanely bloody as to put Lucas and Lysle to the sword'; 'Fayrefaxe's own party doe soe exclayne against the butchery . . . that it's thought there iss an end of proceedings in that kind. The Parliament are selling the Scotts common prisoners to the Barbadoes and other plantations, which I conceive to be about 12,000 or 14,000 men, and artickle the merchants for theire not returning. I thinke they meane to transplant the whole nation.' Again and again Edmund returns to the tragedy of Colchester: 'I shall adde something now which must render Fayrefaxe's murthering those gallant gentlemen the more odious, and theire own diurnalls confirme my argument, for upon the question what mercy wass, it wass

Aug. 28,
1648.

Sept. 14,
1648.

Sept. 24,
1648.

resolv'd by Fayrefaxe hiss own commissioners in hiss name "that it wass to kill or save whome the generall pleas'd, but he had given that frequent testimonye of hiss civillity to such ass fell into hiss power that none neede suspect severity, neverthelesse he would not be obliged to mercy." Now let any person judge whither thiss answer and exposition of mercy did not implicitly promise lyfe to all,¹ but it wass a high tyranny to bring thiss extreame into his power, for ass every gentleman and souldyer iss obliged to a punctuall observance of the trust committed to him by defending to hiss utmost all persons, townes, and forts under hiss command, soe there iss a civill and honourable custome, and soe authenticke that it may not improperly be called a lawe, amongst souldyers to give noble and honourable conditions to their enemy though in the greatest straight and necessity. I shall only give two examples, and those from noe meane souldyers, and yet when the besieged could not hold out an houre; the one iss from the last prince of Orange to those in the Basse [? Bois-le-Duc] after he had sprung hiss mine and hiss men upon the rampiers, upon a parley beaten of by drumme, he caus'd hiss men to retreate and gave the besieged their own conditions, and thiss after sixe or eight monthes siege. The other iss from the Earle of Callander to St Edmund Cary, governour of Hartlepool neare Durham. Caryes souldyers conspired to deliver him up, and sent thiss offer of theirs to my lord Callander then before the towne, but my lord abhorring thiss treachery, sent in their base engagement to the governour by a trumpet of hiss own, and withall hiss name to a blanke sheete of paper, and desired him to write hiss own conditions. These gentlemen of Colchester tooke up armes by the prince of Wales hiss commission, and entered into parley for surrender of the towne assoone ass the Scotts (which were their expected reliefe) were destroyed, and a counsell of warr would have condemn'd them had they surrendred sooner, but ass the rebellion of England iss the most notorious

¹ For the actual words, see Gardiner's *Great Civil War*, vol. iii. p. 458.

of any that ever was since the beginning of the world, soe certainly it iss prosecuted and justified with the most mercilesse inhumanity and barbarisme. . . . The sufferers have dyed with honour and glory and the actors live in horror and infamy.'

Lord Ormonde is sailing at last and Edmund writes: Sept. 28,
1648. 'My Lord is resolved to go aboard this night and to tugge it out with any wind and to sayle on the French coast till he comes to the lands end, for fear of parliament shippes; thusse you see they make us fear them, though wee will not love them.' Letters are to be sent to him through 'Mr. James Buck, my Lady Marquesse's gentleman usher,' who remained with her at Caen.

He encloses a note to Edmund, aged 11, saying he knows not 'how little time I may have to write, so I take the liberty to trouble you the oftener while I am here'; signed, 'your uncle and humble servant.'

He writes to Mary Verney from Thurles: 'I shall constantly preserve not only a never dying, but a constant Nov. 23,
1648. growing respect towards you.'

We have no letter from Edmund to express the consternation he must have felt at the King's death. He writes to Ralph of his desire to serve him; 'if either a naturall or March 13,
1649. vyolent death [a vague presentiment sadly realised] should render me incapable to performe what I soe fervently covet, then be pleas'd to receive thiss acknowledgement from me whyle I have power to make it of your being the best Brother and best freind living.'

In April Sir Henry Newton writes: 'My lady Marquesse is sent for to Ireland. I thinke it will turn the sanctuary for us all.' Things were indeed looking so serious in Ireland for the Parliament, that Cromwell himself prepared to take command of the army, but before he could land there, Colonel Michael Jones, who had been attacked by Ormonde in Dublin, came out in force and utterly routed the Royalists. The slaughter was tremendous, and a false report reached England which Dr. Denton forwards to France. 'On Mun Aug. 16,
1649. his regiment of foot and on Vaughan his regiment of horse,

fell all the slaughter. Mun his regiment were killed all on a heape, not one of them as I can heare but fought it out to the last even against horse and foote,—Mun is for certaine slaine, not wth out much regret, even to his adverse party. Jones himself strooke his hands on his breast, and said he had rather have had him alive than all the prisoners he had, and he should have been as well used as ever was prisoner. . . . It was 1000 to one but Ormond had beene taken, on whom there lights infinite blame, though not fit for any of Mun his friends to say so, he being at tick tak and continued playing after the alarum. . . . My hart hath beene so sad since the newes of Mun as I thinke hath not beene since Edgehill, but we must not repine, it is God not the Sabeans, that takes all away, let him do what seems best in his eyes.' The letter goes on to say that Jones had had Mun honourably buried. This circumstantial story proved to be entirely false. To have been killed in battle would have been a better fate for the brave young soldier than that which awaited him. Cromwell hastened his departure, and was followed by Ireton and the remainder of the army. Lord Ormonde threw all his best troops into Drogheda under Sir Arthur Aston, a first-rate officer, and entrusted his own regiment to the command of Sir Edmund Verney. 'The defences of the place were contemptible,' and Ormonde was unable to attack the besieging force. On September 9 both Aston and Verney sent despatches to him.

Sept 9,
1649.

'May it please your Ex^{lley},' wrote Edmund cheerfully, 'I could never say (since I had the honour & happinesse to serve your Ex^{lley}) that I ever look'd my none attendance on your person with that cheerefull willingnesse ass at thiss present, being in greate hope & expectation that the service I am at present engaged in will receive a happy issue, & the cheife grounde of thiss confidence iss the unity, right understanding & indeede entire freindshippe betweene our selves; Warren & Wall are my most intimate comrades, & indeede I have not in my lyfe knowne more of dilligence & circumspection then in these two gentlemen. Wee ordinarily meete once in a day to discourse of our condition &

what is fit to be done. Amongst the rest the probablest way of releife iss sometimes conjectured at: for our condition, our strength in men, amunition & provisions the bearer iss able to informe your Ex^{lly} of. Our men are all in hearte & courage having still had good successe in our sallyes, & wee doe little feare what the enemy can doe forcibly against uss. . . . Thiss country will be irrecoverably wasted if thiss seige last much longer. Wee are informed that your Ex^{lly} hath a considerable army, & our humble opinions have been that you might advance & lodge at Slane with much safety, & that the enemy could noe way force you to fight unlesse to their infinite disadvantage, & certainly they could much lesse mainetaine their seige; their campe iss subject to wants, they bringing all their supplies by sea. Thiss I thought fitting though pryvately yet humbly to offer to your Ex^{lly} from a person who hath vowed himselfe eternally My Lord your Ex^{llyes} most faythfull & ever devoted humble servant, Edmund Verney. If your Ex^{lly} conceive I may be serviceable by offering anything from hence, I shall humbly desire a cypher.¹

On the morrow Cromwell began the bombardment and Aston penned his last written words; two days of unspeakable horror and carnage followed, and Drogheda was taken. Sept. 11
and 12,
1649. Inchiquin on the 15th reported to Ormonde: 'All conclude that no man [had] quarter with Cromwell's leave, that yet many were privately saved by officers and soldiers . . . Verney, Finglas, Warner, and some other officers were alive in the hands of some of Cromwell's officers 24 hours after the business, but whether . . . they are yet living they cannot tell.' Nov. 18,
1649. Sir Ralph on the 4th of November was still 'between hope and feare concerninge deare deare Mun,' and it was not till November 30 that he received Mr. Buck's letter from Caen announcing the death of 'your Brother and my deare freind, Sir Edmund Varny, who behaved himselfe wth the greatest gallentry that could be—he was slaine at Drahoda three dayes after quarter was given him, as he was

¹ *Carte MSS.* xxv. fol. 501.

walkinge wth Cromwell by way of protection, one Ropier who is brother to the Lord Ropier, caled him aside in a pretence to speake wth him, beinge formerly of acquaintance, and insteade of some frendly office w^{ch} Sir Ed: might expect from him, he barberously rann him throw wth a tuck, but I am confident to see this act once highly revenged; the next day after, one Lt. Coll. Boyle, who had quarter likewise given him, as he was at dinner wth my Lady More, sister to the Earle of Sunderland, in the same Towne, one of Cromwell's souldiers came and whispred him in the eare to tell him he must presently be put to deth, who risinge from the table, the lady aske him whither he was goeing, he answered, Madam to dye, who noe sooner steped out of the roome but hee was shott to deth. These are cruelties of those traitors, who noe doubt will finde the like mercie when they stand in neede of it.'

Sept. 16,
1649.

Here is the relation from the opposite point of view: Cromwell, writing to Bradshaw, from Dublin, says, 'It hath pleased God to bless our endeavours at Tredah. After battery we stormed it. The enemy were about 3000 in the town: they made a stout resistance, and near 1000 of our men being entered, the enemy forced them out again. But God gave a new courage to our mon, they attempted again, and entered. . . . Being entered, we refused them quarter: having the day before summoned the town. I believe we put to the sword the whole number of the defendants. I do not think thirty of the whole number escaped with their lives. Those that did are in safe custody for the Barbadoes. . . . This hath been a marvellous great mercy . . . the enemy had put into this garrison almost all their prime soldiers under the command of their best officers. . . . There were some 7 or 8 regiments, Ormond's being one, under the command of Sir Edmund Varney. I do not believe . . . that any officer escaped with his life, save only one lieutenant . . . I wish that all honest hearts may give the glory of this to God alone.' 'I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgement of God,' wrote Cromwell to Lenthall the Speaker, concerning the wholesale slaughter of men who had submitted,

and the selling of hundreds more into slavery. ‘The defendants in Tredah consisted of the Lord of Ormond’s regiment (Sir Edmund Varney Lieutenant Colonel), of 400’; &c., &c. Considering that Lenthall was a kinsman of the Verneys, this could hardly have been an agreeable communication from ‘your most obedient servant, Oliver Cromwell.’

Among all who suffered none seems to have been more regretted than the brave soldier, Edmund Verney, aged 32. Young as he was he had seen much service, and had been a trusted commander. The favourite of his father, an affectionate brother and friend, who won upon every person with whom he had to do by his upright chivalrous conduct and his care for all the weakly and wanting, thrown upon himself in those difficult years, tender and true, with a healthy ambition, and a dauntless courage that rejoiced to find itself in the midst of danger, Edmund was indeed the ideal in the best sense of a young cavalier.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE 'MACHES' OF THE FIVE GIRLS.

1644-1651.

THE passion of love—as understood by the knights of old—which in the modern novel gives the keynote to all intercourse between man and woman, hardly existed at this time with regard to marriage, which was usually a commercial proceeding—so much 'portion' against so much income. The love of husbands and wives was extremely strong, but the ordinary falling in love of young men and maidens was not thought of much importance.

Aug. 23,
1655.

'I desire to match my daughter to 2,000*l.* a yeare land,' says Mr. 'Bacchus.' The man was a mere appendage to the fortune; children were pawns used to advance the position and wealth of parents. The bargaining was done by friends and relations, but if there were none of these available, the young lady did it herself. Mary Villiers writes to a pretender to her hand: 'The distracted times affrights me from thinking of mariing; . . . wheras you desired mee to make enquiere of you and your estate, I cannot hear of any you have at all; and I would have you know without an estate I will never marry you, nor no man living, and such an estate as my friends like of.'

After Sir Edmund's death Lady Sussex writes to Ralph: 'I am afraid in these bad times you will not mach your sisters as you desire.' It is pathetic to see how he strove to do his best for the five orphan girls, from 9 years old to 21, who were left in his charge. Cary was the only one of the six sisters who had been provided for in marriage by her father. In time the others were all pretty well disposed of,

but the negotiations for their different 'maches,' the bargaining about money matters, how much could be wrung out of poor Ralph for the bride; how much the bridegroom could be expected to supply; the dropping of one proposal after another by the friends of either party with little scruple and no excuse but the barest motives of interest, give a curious picture of the times.

Susan, the eldest girl, lived chiefly with Sir John and Lady Leeke 'in the Flower Delice Court, neare Fetter Lane in Fleet St. London'; she writes to Ralph: 'My brother Thomas has wished mee to a gentillman, w^{ch} has a very good fortune for mee, for hee has att the least 500 pound a year; he is of my one oppinion, otherwais I should nott think of itt. All y^t knows the man gives him good commendations. He is a widoeer butt has noe child; his fortune is in his one hands; he has seene mee, vows y^t itt is the furst time that ever he thought of marriing sence his wif dyed, & if he faile of mee itt shall be the last. Uncle Leeke is coming to town ab^t it. For my portion he never asked what I had; he is a prisoner for his soverraing, but he has his liberty to goe abroad upon his word.' The suitor is Richard Alport, a small Cheshire squire. Henry does not approve: 'As for Sue's buisiness it is in my onderstandinge at a greate stand, for I doe not finde or here a will accept of any offer as yet but ready money to content his creditors; I confess I beelive Sr John hath often Bradge to divers of it, and chifely to you, to gaine you farthrance in it. For my part I have exprest my mind more freely to my sist^r and him then ever I did to you, and indeavoured in a sayre way more than this 3 mounths to breake it, but my counsell will not bee hard, for I see if hee will accept of her she is resolved to take him wth all faults; I shall wish her as much happiness and content as any one livinge, if it proceede, but I dout strongely the goeing one of it, for a is unconstant in his demands; in a word I dout if it bee not decided suddenly she will suffer in opinions.'

'She expects daley your answer,' Henry writes to Ralph, 'in accomplishing her demands & desiers, but mistrusts that

I will doe my best to prevent it. . . . I told her playnely, as I allwayes did, my oppinion of the mach; wh^{ch} was if she had him I consived her absolutely undon; if she have him, & that my words prove not true, hange mee.'

Nov. 20,
1645.

Uncle Leeke favours the match with Mr. Alport. In November Susan writes that her suitor 'dus now accept of this last proposition in y^r last letter, if you mean itt as all us understand itt, w^{ch} is this, how that he should receive 200*l*. presently, and 100*l*. in Nov. 1646, y^e other 100*l*. in Nov. 1647, and you say y^t you will do y^r best to gitt it for him sooner, w^{ch} if you can you will pleasure him much.' The stuff for two gowns which Ralph promised her she wishes to have sent when this 'proposition' is 'sett.' 'Pray brother lett mee beg a payer of very leetle french sisers of you, for now I doe intend to turn workwoman, and a very good huswif, so y^t y^r next letter may conclud all bisnesis, if nott I think y^t I shall have nothing to be good huswife of.'

Jan. 7,
1646.

Next comes a long and piteous account from Susan of her trying circumstances. Mr. Alport 'is very redy to perform all things in 10 days worning, so where the fault lyeth I know nott, but I suffer extremely in the tediousness of itt, both in my honour and purse, which are both beyond my discretion to avoid. I had rather be buried alive than loose my honour, and I have often writt you word that I am att greater expence than I am able to subsist with, yett I doe not find fault with my allowance, for I know itt is moer then my sisters have, yett itt will not keepe mee in london. . . . I am in debt for my diett. . . . My deare uncle and aunt, out of ther affections to mee, and because that I shall nott goe out of town till this busnes is ended one way or other, dus trust mee for my diett, although I know they doe boreow itt, & pawne for itt. These things troubles mee extremely.'

Jan. 11,
1646.

Ralph is vexed 'that Mr. Alport conceives himselfe neglected, and I am deeply consured because my answeare to the letters . . . were not already come. I am in a very hard condition amoungst them, when I must not only be condemned for my owne faults, but the uncertainty of the winde, the stormes at sea, miscarriage and interception of

Letters, and a thousand other hazards, all must bee layed to my charge. This is pure love, is it not ?'

Henry observes in answer : 'S^r, it is love that makes her ^{Jan. 22,} pen write soe sharply, and not malise, yet I could wish her ^{1646.} more discreete then to condem so good a freind & Brother, being I know faultles.'

Ralph indeed seems to be doing all that he can possibly afford for his sister ; he writes to Sir John : 'I shall use my ^{Feb. 22,} best endeavours to sell my goods in the country with all ^{1646.} the speed that may bee. I wish I could doe it in an lower, but you know at what distance they are.' He tells Susan it is the best news he has had for a long time that she is contented with his offer : 'It seemes Mr. Alport desires the ^{Feb. 22,} marrage may bee in Easter Weeke ; & that you know noe ^{1646.} obsticle but want of cloathes. I wish there may not, & then I shall not doubt it, for I will write to a freind (in case there is noe other obsticle, and that the marrage is soe suddainly) to helpe you to stufle for three gownes and the 30%. either in money or credit which is as good . . . It seemes that Mr. Alport knowes of noe more then 600%. of yours in my hands, and that hee hath now againe promised you to quitt mee of all that I owe towards your Portion. Therefore you must bee sure to have him deliver upp all the Bonds for those moneyes that I owe towards your portion, soe that the overplus of the 600%. may goe to the payment of your Uncle Leeke and other creditors. I pray deliver this inclosed to your Uncle John Denton and desire him to informe mee ; and then . . . I shall deduct the money I lent you, & in the next place pay your Uncle Leeke (to whome you are infinitely obleiged), and the remainder you must dispose.'

After all these elaborate arrangements there are further delays. It appears that Mr. Alport, fearing lest Ralph should be declared a delinquent, preferred bonds as security from him, instead of the engagement first proposed. Susan is aggrieved because the money for her clothes is not to be given her till the 'joynter' is sealed. 'Sartinly noe frind ^{April 9,} or foe y^t I have can mistrust y^t he will nott have mee after ^{1646.} y^t he has drawn y^s Joynter & bought my ring, & gave itt

mee befoer all my frinds, and profest y^t he longs till itt be dunne . . . I cannott chuse butt be in admiration, that my cloaths should be denyed, nay I did butt desire my brother henry butt to helpe me ether to stuff, or so much mony has would bye mee petticoatt & bodys, because that such bodys y^t I wheare cannott be made under three weeks time. . . . Suer itt would have binne much handsumer for mee to have had them befoer I had married. . . . itt may begitt a suspition in his frinds y^t I brought noe cloaths to my backe and y^t he bought me those w^{ch} you will give mee. . . . I think itt is dune without y^r knowleg.’

Sir John Leeke, failing in health and crippled with debts, could only afford Susan a temporary home, and it was no wonder that she tried to press forward her marriage with a good man who truly loved her. But for the present she had to wait, while the negotiations dragged on between her impoverished brother abroad, and her still more needy relations at home.

Penelope, the next in age, was a much more thrifty manager, though less lovable than Susan, but the hard character she was credited with in later years may have been developed by the trials of her married life with a husband who drank and ill-used her. A letter written on her first meeting with a suitor shows her in a gentle and affectionate light, with a pretty tribute to her brother's affection and care.

June 8,
1643.

‘Sr Ralph, I am very glade to here that you are pleasde with my not going to see my sister: I shall not willingly do anything bout what I shall acqueunt you with befoere I do it. For that good compeannion, w^{ch} I speoke to you of in my last letter, I meane that cossan of mine, you will give him meany thankses for the favours that I have resceded from him. I could never a had more respect from you, had I bin in the house with you, then I had dealy from him. Hee would meany times com and site with mee, or call me to goo a walking with him to or thre ouers together. I am confident that you cannot chuse bout think that I have lost a very good compeanion of him. Hee is my master and hee doth

call mee his chearge. Euer hereafter when I have any occation to speake of him to you, that is all the neame that I will give him. I am confident that he doos love my sister [probably Ralph's wife] very well, for he did drinke hur helth to mee every day, and no pleace would serve him att the teabull bout by mee, and did hee not come so sone as wee to sit donne the pleace was left for him.' They did not meet again for some years.

The sisters had at times the inestimable benefit of Tom's exertions on their behalf; he took credit to himself for introducing Alport to Susan, and one of his clever letters to Sir Ralph describes the girls' unhappy position. 'Since I am desired to write, I shall (with much brevitye) Feb. 20,
1645 declare in what a sad condition my sisters in generall are now in, and how (with a little help of yours) they may be much bettered. . . . They living att Claydon are subject to the affrights of rude souldiers in rushing in att all houres both by day & night, & not a man there that dares show himself in their defence. My sisters (god help them) are so sencible of their incivilitye allready that I have heard them say that they could not eat hardly in a week one meale's meat contentedly. . . . Judge you of this their dayly troubles, in case they should returne thither againe. . . . My sister pen . . . was ever willing to confine herself to such a small livelyhood as you were able to allow her. Moreover she hath (with that small annuitye) maintained herself like her father's daughter and your sister. Now shce haveing some occasions to London (not dreameing of marryage) I brought a gentleman to her. . . . After I perceived they liked each other, my brother & I gave a meeting to his friends to conclude upon busynessess.' Ralph does not seem to have acceded to the demands made on him by the suitor, for Pen writes indignantly: 'In the letter you sent to my Feb. 20,
1645. brother harry was much joy exprest for my hopes of prelarment, for the which I return you many thanks, but I find that youre outward expressions will afford me but little comfort unless theay are mixed with true and reall affection in ading to my livelyhood 20l. a yere. The times I must confess are

bad, yet thanks be to God you are not driven to that strait but that you may add to my fortin the above specifide sum. . . . Your house at Cladon I am & ever have bin willing to live in, whilst I had compinny that I liked, but if my to sisters will steay in towne, it will bee extreme uncouth living. Howsoever, notwithstanding the outrages of souldiers I shall be very willing to return to the place agane, in case you ar minded to breake this mach of, which if you doe you must give me a live to think, and likewise you must looke to be censured by the world to be the most unkind and unnatural brother. I shall, till this letter is answered, continue in that good opinion I ever had of you, & I hope you will give me no caus to the contrary. Good brother, if you are the manes to breake this match of, I pray give me 5*l*. towards my expencis in london, which will be sum helpe to your most discontented sister.' After all, the affair came to nothing, and Pen returned to Claydon.

Margaret had her own independent fortune, and was a girl of high spirit and strong will. While Susan was vainly struggling to get her outfit Henry writes: 'Now their is a third sister of yours wants a gowne to dance at the weddinge of the other to as much as thay'; 'You must not forget Pegg, for she intends to daunce,' but Pegg the expectant bridesmaid was a bride first; the money difficulties that so worried her elder sisters not existing in her case.

April 13,
1646.

Henry writes to Ralph: 'S^r in the midst of all our crosses and your misfortunes I have some good newse to send you . . . w^{ch} is sist^r Pegg is suddenly to be maryed to Mr. Elmes of Norhamtonshire. his estate is knowne to the world to bee at the lest to thowsand a yeare, onley portions accepted. A makes her of his oune offer five hundred a yeare good security Joynter.' Henry goes on: 'I will not say I brought the younge man to her, but I may holdly say had it not bine for mee and my credit she will acknowledge it had never a bine don. . . .'

May 6,
1646.

Ralph replies: 'You speake of Pegg's marrage; I wish it hartily, but I doubt tis too good newes to bee true, because till now noe creature ever made the least mention of it to

your most affectionate freinde & servant R. V.' He hears again of it from Susan. 'My sis. peg is likly to be married has soone has I am, to a pretty gentleman of a very great fortune. Itt may be wee should have binne married both of aday, butt I will nott, because she will have cloaths like her selfe & I shall nott, therfore itt must nott be.' Pegg had undoubtedly the better trousseau, but Sue had secured by far the kinder husband, for if Susan's match was long on hand, poor Peg's was rather a case of 'Marry in haste, and repent at leisure.' In less than a month from the date of Henry's last letter he writes again: 'This is the weddinge ^{May 7,} day & I am instantly goeing to church with my sister, soe ^{1646.} you must expect to here but little newse or buisness from mee at the present, onley give mee leave to . . . tell you the dispute beetwne Sue & I was not a bout the cloathes, for she did not then know I had them. A fore your letter came to my hands she had her taby gowne and 3/4 of mee, which was more then you gave me order for, but . . . I did it to pleser her. She is now willinge to bec freinds with mee and well she may.'

Susan composed a voluminous epistle to her brother, in which she treats at large of her own circumstances, and touches on Margaret's. It is melancholy to hear of the latter, a bride of a few weeks, 'poore peg has married a very humersume cros boy has ever I see in my life, & she is very ^{July 16,} much altered for the worse since she was married; I doe not much blame her for beinge so altered, because sumtimes he ^{1646.} maks her cry night & day.'

Henry's account of Mr. Elmes is equally unsatisfactory. 'A proves by fitts very bad & divelish jelous, now and then for an houer strangely fond. I must doe her write, she deserves it not; want of worth & breedinge makes him doe it. I am often forst to speake bigg words when a acts the part of a Madman, & that stills him for a time.' Dr. Denton says, 'Peggie is now a housekeeper and is settled in Coven Garden.' Mr. Elmes was knighted by James II., 1688. Margaret's lot did not grow happier. 'Peg's husband hath a trick to stop her letters at the post

house,' writes Sue, much aggrieved, when recounting her sister's domestic worries. But her fair-minded brother cannot allow that the fault lies entirely with the husband.

Aug. 1618 'Elmes complains that Pegg & her friendes curse him & threaten him, & how his owne Brother was faine to lie at his Baylie's house, & that Pegg's friends put him to Extraordinary charges with Horses etc.; this Pegg ought not to doe nor suffer; she should rather court his friends if she desire to regaine his hart.' A formal separation was talked of, and a letter from Sir Ralph to Edmund, who was trying to act as a mediator, is curious as giving a picture of the proprieties of the time for a woman in so difficult a position. Sir Thomas Elmes will give her but a very small allowance. 'I wish with all my hart that they were well reconcyled againe, butt I doubt that cannot be donn suddenly, I pray wright to Pegg efectually aboute it & desire her to advise with the Dr in what place she had best live, & above all charge her not to exceed in clothes, espetially in bright coulors [she was only five-and-twenty], nor to keep much company, for itt is nott fitt for a person in her condition eyther to flant it in clothes or appeare often in publike as at playhouses and tavernes, though itt be with her owne & nearest frends. a retired country life were much better for her, butt in this time of warr, I doe nott conceave her owne house the fittest place for her, because she will be liable both to quartering soldiery, & a thousand rude actions which too many of your profession doe falcely call gallantry. If she doe leave her house, I hope he will give her good furniture for her chamber & a bedd for her maide, with some linnen for her bed & bord. . . . I am confident he is soe much a gentleman that he will not refuse her these nessesaries, & more then meere nessesaries I hope she will not desire of him.' Another time, when Dr. Denton has them in his house to make peace, he says that their language is not to be matched in Billingsgate.

July 16,
1646.

Susan's long patience met with its reward; 'y^e bisnese is ended betweene Mr. Alporte & mee,' she writes, 'all butt the serimony in the church, which god willing shall be solemnised

next weeke . . . I hope I shall be happy, because his affections has continewed so long to mee nott withstanding all the oppositions.' She is promised a certain sum to pay her debts with, and has acquainted Mr. Alport with their amount, but she is ashamed to tell him that a large sum is due to Sir John Leeke, and that, until it is paid, his goods and all that he has are in pawn.

After this the wedding follows pretty quickly, and on the day after she writes: 'I was married very privately, & this day my frinds heareing of itt came to mee, butt I have beged ther pardon for my abceince whilst I writt to you & my sister. In the meane time he keeps them company . . . My uncle leeke after he had given mee away, stoll outt of towne.' And then comes an earnest request that Ralph will let her know what he is doing about her debt to Sir John. She continues: 'I hope that I am extremly happy in him [Mr. Alport]; I would nott have itt to doe againe for anything in this world.' There is a touching little postscript to another letter: 'I was never so happy sence my father dyed has I am now, I thank god. This is all that I can say of itt now—he presents his sarvice to you.'

The next is a curiously cheerful letter to be dated from the Fleet. 'The last time that I writt to you I sent you word that I was in the prison with my husband, which it may be you might wonder att, because I have formerly writt you word that before I would marry he would be outt of this place . . . butt . . . the knight that Mr. Alport is bound for is at this present selling of land to redeeme him, and I am confident we shall be out . . . by Candlemas. Itt is noe prison to mee: I live has well heare has ever I lived any wheare in all my life, & dare compare husbands with her that has the best.' 'My uncle leeke is in the countrey, & duse send very often to mee for his mony: he would faine have his goods att home with him, that he might com to towne with outt being bauld att for his mony.' She is afraid he will come upon Mr. Alport for the debt, and that this may be 'a means to begett sune words' between her and her husband. 'I should be very sory to have any debts or any thing els

Aug. 6,
1646.

Aug. 20,
1646.

Aug. 27,
1646.

allter our affections. Deare brother consider how unhappy I should bee, that itt should fall outt so.' Then comes a list of those to whom she owes money. 'If you will sattisfie theese I shall be a gentlewoman, if nott I am quitt undune.' Ralph promises to do what he can for her, but there are endless difficulties in the way, some of which concern the loss of a 'noate.' In the next letter she has been put to great shifts; Sir John Leeke had died, and her aunt, being without so much as a sixpence in the house to bury him, came to Susan for the 32*l*. so long owing. She, poor thing, declares it 'was affliction upon affliction to mee, because I was not in a condition to help her . . . tell my husband of itt I durst nott'; neither could the money be procured from any other friend. At length she applied to 'brother Elmes,' 'and my earnest Intreaty & passion together prevailed with him too lend her 20*l*. . . . He tells me that he cannott tarry longer for itt, butt whilst I send to you.' Then come further entreaties for the money, lest Mr. Elmes should tell Mr. Alport about it. 'My unkle dyed so much in debt has I feare wee shall have the corps seised upon before wee can gitt itt outt of towne. He desired to be buried at Chigwell, & thether I am goeing with him.' After this Ralph contrived some means by which the 32*l*. should be paid.

In October, Penelope has a suitor, apparently the cousin she was in love with three years before, John Denton of Fawler, but his character had deteriorated in the meanwhile. There was no time to consult Ralph, nor did the bridegroom ask his father's leave. 'One my word,' says Henry, 'I know not one in England would a made her his wife one the like conditions . . . One my life it was not out of disrespect or contempt to you, for had she stayd for your approbation she must have lost him; this one my fayth I must witness for her. S^t, she was sensible her portion lay in a desperate condition, besides, she grew in yeares & was not to all men's likinge; these reasons made her soe ready to yeeld to his desires, haveinge most of her freinds' consent present. I confess when she sent post for mee I knew not of it, but when she told mee I did not oppose it, but prest him much to tarry

till I could informe you of it. One noe condition a would not, lest you should putt a stopp to it. If his father & mother at their aryvall whome like of it, I am in greate hopes a will make a kind and lovinge husband . . . a hath in a manner given over drinking, or else you may assuer your selfe I had ever soe much reall Affection for her as never to a yellded to it.' He has advanced her 30*l*. for 'gownes & linnen,' which he hopes Ralph will repay him, and not think that he has been 'prodegall . . . for had I a bine to a payd it myselfe, I protest I could not a bine more sparinge less she had gon naked to him.' Then comes an entreaty to the parental elder brother that he will also pay a debt of 10*l*. which Pen has incurred, 'that I may justly sware to her new father when wee goe that she is clad like a gentlewoman, & owes not in the world a penny. I purpose in 3 or 4 dayes to carryer whome to him, then I will returne you an account of our wellcome, god grant it may bee a good one.'

Ralph in the meantime wrote to Dr. Denton: 'Now for Oct. 21
Penn, if you could marry her to J. D. 'twould bee a master 1646.
peece of servise, & obleige us all; I thirst after it, therfore I pray try your best skill. I confesse I doe not see any greate inconvenience to the two younge ones if the deed had been donn without acquainting the father, for I beleeve the Land is settled, & if they carry themselves wisely & with respect to him, a little time & good nature would procure an act of Oblivion. Keepe this to your selfe, for at this distance I cannot judg well of this matter.' John Denton and Penelope Verney were married by licence at St. Bartholomew-the-Less, Sept. 30, 1646.

Henry wrote again: 'I have broake the Mach to his Oct. 19,
father and mother, soe that thay both approve of it, and 1646.
have recived her with greate content & make infinite much of her; my sister is well plesed, soe if the Gentleman continue Amorus I hope the mach will be happy for both; as I write you word afore it was an adventuer, but as it did luck it hath suckceded well. . . . If her hussband prove good, as I hope a will, I dout not at all the kind usage

of his freinds, for thay are perfect good and honest people.'

Nov. 7,
1646.

The newly-married wife herself writes to apologise for not having waited for her eldest brother's consent, and assures him that she had 'desird no more money then what did supply my present nesity, and my weding was without having my frinds at it, being very sencibull I put you to a further charge . . . give me live to till you that I have an exselent father & mother-in-law, and I hoope A Good husband.'

There were only two unmarried sisters left. Poor little Betty, aged thirteen, produces a letter to her eldest brother in a laboured copybook hand, and desires him 'not to expect many lins from me, for love consist not in words but in deads, for my hart cannot expres it self in the outward aproane so far as in woardly it is afected, by reson of my tender years.'

Sept. 5,
1645?

Mall was eighteen, and a year before had been considered worthy the notice of her brother Henry. He wrote of her, 'As for sister Mary she hath left her ould trickes & like to prove the handiest of them all, weh reioyses mee much.' Again: 'She is now growne a womman & desiers much with your consent to be a broade; she is handy & as I thinke most fitt for it; it is pitty she should continue much longer where she is, for the sight of the world & being in company would doe her much good'; 'she is witty & very tractable to please.' She should go to some place 'where she may lerne a little breedinge, for indeede she lacks it.' Ralph asks where Henry proposes to place her; at Claydon 'her diet and cloathes cost little, and one maid serves her and the rest . . . I pray consider well whether her remove at present may not bee more for her disadvantage, for if that place where shее is should bee sequestred, she beinge there might get something to keepe her from beggery & starving, where as if she bee removed perhapps they would not be soe kinde.'

Henry replies in his grand style: 'I did forbare to try my friends till I had your consent in generall. I can tell

you, to one greate countes or other. I shall say no more but breedinge she wants much, which at the ende will prove her ruine.' After this gloomy prognostication he goes on to propose that she and Pen should live for a while 'att a Parke, I have lately taken posetion of it, it is Otlands, my cousen hath plast mee in . . . If you will give Mull leave it will I know content her much and please mee well.' However, it appears that 'Sister Mary did not fancy the lodge, in regard it stood alone and that it was in my Absence malencoly.'

The money troubles of the Alports seem never ending. Susan gives the history of a quarrel she has had with Tom's wife, to whom she owes 11*l*. This lady hearing that the Alports had received a certain sum, 'cons with open mouth to my husband for this mony, & swore to him yf hee did nott pay her that she would have his hart bloud outt, yf ever he sett his fute outt of doores, & called mee all to naught and swore she would kick mee. This was done in the Fleett, which did inrage my husband so extreimly that hee sayed sumthing which she tould my brother of . . . my brother sent my husband a challing. . . . I had noe body to stand my frind to take up this bisnes, butt my unkle Doctor . . . who gott my brother Thomas & diverse of my frinds after itt was known, & chid him soundly, butt all that the could say to him did noe good withoutt the mony. That I could nott pay & my hus would nott, so to avoid bloud my unkle Dr. layed downe the £11'; and the upshot of it all is to beg that Rulph will repay the Doctor.

When Mary returned to England she spoke out pretty freely concerning her sisters-in-law and their behaviour. She says of the elder ones: 'Tis a very great blessing to us that they are all married; for I did neavor in my life see or hear of soc much indescretion as is amongst them; truly there is not one of them that hath any discretion.' Her impression of Susan is that she is poor, 'butt hath a very kind husband as tis possible, but very deboche; soc y^t I feare if he have any estate itt will come to noething very suddainly . . . Truly to say truth she makes very much the best

Dec. 3,
1646.

Feb. 11,
1647.

Feb. 4,
1647

wife of all your sisters, and studdies nothing butt to please her husband, and if you did butt see him you would wonder how she could be soe fond of him, butt indeed I think he is very kind to her: butt I feare they will come to be in wantes, for I doe nott see any great hopes of his freedom & the lieing there makes him spend a very great deale of money; I beleeve he had better have payed the deptt att first twice over; for lieing there & haveing nothing to doe hath bredd such a habitt of drinking on hime that he can doe noe thing elce. . . . Poore Pegg hath soe ill a husband that I cannott give you a carracter badd enoughe of him; & I feare she will make herselfe a very unhapy woeman, for I neyther like the councell y^t is given her nor y^e way she takes with him'; and when Cary and Mr. Stewkeley went to stay with the Elmes', Lady Verney says, 'Tis a hundred to one pegg's husband turns them out of his howse again within a fortnight. . . . Betty went y^e other day to see her sister Pen: whoe they say looks misserablely; & thatt they are much in disorder in that house, & y^t her hus: begins to flye out & be deboist againe. . . . I think when pleas god to enable me to goe downe [to Claydon] I had best eyther take away or locke upp all that is of y^e best and take away y^e keyes my selfe; for I find they will all take what they have a mind toe elce; for nott long agoe I sent to Mrs. Francis to send me up a wrought sheete if there were any down, because I know your mother when she died left some to work . . . butt she sent me word that there was one nott quite finished which your sister Penn took away with her; & upon y^e same grounds for ought I know they may take away all that is left.'

Aug. 10,
1647.

Mary writes from Claydon to her husband: 'My sister Sue gave my sister Penn noetice of my coming downe; soe she & her husband & his Brother were here 2 or 3 dayes before I came to moete me, & stayed wth us here as long after I came downe; which hindred me very much & I think they would have stayed longer if I had spake much to them; my sister Pegg & Cary hath sent to see whether I was come because they would come hether toe, butt I have gott my Sister Mary

to putt them as civelly as she could off from coming because here is neyther bedds nor sheetes to lay them in . . . & I know theyre husbands would thlik itt a very strange thing to be soe entertained as they must have bin heare, soe I hope they will have more witt then to come . . . for my owne green furnetur w^{ch} you putt downe in y^e noate to bring away your sister Penn about toe yeares agoe plundered you of itt, & y^e side saddle to itt. I neavor knew any thing of itt untell that morning she went away, & then she told me of itt . . . butt I gave them to understand when she was gon how much I resented y^e taking away the sheete & that toe without soe much as asking for itt; butt they all say y^e she swore you gave them to her & she would have them by force, & that I had more then that came toe of hers.' 'I did a little incivelly putt of your sister Cary and Pegg from coming, because I was very unwilling theyr husbands should see y^e sorryfull doings thatt is in this place; butt for Penn's husband he is soe very simple thatt twas noe great matter for him, butt in my opinion he is as fitt a match for her as can be, though she outgoes him much in cuning, for she is deadly crafty. . . . here is a great looking Glass & M^{rs} Francis & Will Roades swers they have had y^e heviest life to keep itt that can be Imagioned; for your sisters have often threatned if they would nott lett them have itt to bring a troupe of horse to break downe the walls where twas.'

Aug 18,
1647.

A little later Mary writes—'A man brought me word that my sister Mall is come to towne which is the ferst word that ever I hard of any such design; itt secmes they keep theyr matters very privately . . . she is now at D^{rs}. Mis Isc [Mrs. Isham] spake to me that you would bestow forty shilling for toe monthes dancing for her, soe I promised her that, but elce I doe not meddle with them . . . ' Lady Verney took a severe view of their behaviour. 'I tell you my opinion I think they are all toe Indoscreeete to gett a descreet Man . . . they say Mall shall goe into the country to live with her Sister Pegg soe soone as she getts her husband's consent, . . . she hath witt enough, but as wild as a buck . . . I feare if we goe

March 4.
1647.

March 25,
1647.

to putt them as civelly as she could off from coming because here is neyther bedds nor sheetes to lay them in . . . & I know theyre husbands would think itt a very strange thing to be soe entertained as they must have bin heare, soe I hope they will have more witt then to come . . . for my owne green furnetur w^{ch} you putt downe in y^e noute to bring away your sister Penn about toe yeares agoe plundered you of itt, & y^e side saddle to itt. I neavor knew any thing of itt untell that morning she went away, & then she told me of itt . . . butt I gave them to understand when she was gon how much I resented y^e taking away the sheete & that toe without soe much as asking for itt; butt they all say y^e she swore you gave them to her & she would have them by force, & that I had more then that came toe of hers.' 'I did a little incivelly putt of your sister Cary and Pegg from coming, because I was very unwilling theyr husbands should see y^e sorryfull doings thatt is in this place; butt for Penn's husband he is soe very simple thatt twas noe great matter for him, butt in my opinion he is as fitt a match for her as can be, though she outgoes him much in cuning, for she is deadly crafty. . . . here is a great looking Glass & M^{rs} Francis & Will Roades swers they have had y^e heviest life to keep itt that can be Imagioned; for your sisters have often threatned if they would nott lett them have itt to bring a troupe of horse to break downe the walls where twas.'

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March 4.
1647.

March 25,
1647.

about to cross her in liveing where she may & hath a mind to she will think we are bound to lett her live with us ; . . . she hath neavor been but twice wth me since she came to towne, neyther doe they evor ask my advise for any thing they make or doe concerning her ; soe I take noe notice of any thing they doe ; butt I find Mis Ise orders most of her matters . . . truly she wants fashion much, but I feare where she is she will rather learne rudeness, for they are all very wild.'

March 24,
1647.

Ralph replies: 'I much wonder at Mall's coming upp, but more that she did it without your knowledge. that must not bee suffred, unlesse you meane she shall bee your Master, therefore I pray expresse your dislike therof, & mine too (if you thinke fit), for whilst she is at my allowance, I expect bee made acquainted with all such motions. informe mee at large of all that concernes her.'

April 28,
1647.

In another letter Lady Verney gives more details of the arrangements proposed for the girl: 'Now for Mall going to live with her sister. . . . I find they desire thatt you should give her her allowance for her clothes a part & pay for her diett your selfe, & nott lett her doe itt for feare she should spend itt & leave her diett unpaid for; which hath been the greatest hindrance to make Pegg's husband stick att the receaving; for he is soe base thatt he was afraide he should nott be sure to be payed for her diett . . . your frend M^r Br[owne] y^t lived att y^e Duke's garden was wth me yesterday, soe I told him point blank thatt if he would marry I would help him to a wife: I told him the condition of the woeman & how she had been bredd in the country w^{ch} he was much pleased withall; I told him her portion was to be a thowsand pound, & how thatt untell that was rayased she had fifty pound a year allowed her . . . now he seemed to like all very well, butt he sayed he thought his owne fortune was to meane to desarve her, for whatt . . . he had untell his mother's deth he gave me to understand was butt fifeteen hundred pound. . . . I did nott name the woeman to him nor told him whatt relation she was to us; now I confess the man is very desarving, but his fortune is meane &

whether she would accept of itt I know nott . . . if his fortune were liked off I could lett him see her wth out letting him know she is your sister untell I knew whether he liked her or nott ; though he told me he should nott like her y^e worse for nott being very hansom.' 'Will Johnson May 27, 1647. [Roades] tells me . . . he hath ever payed 18 pound a yeare for Mall's diett, now truly twelve pound a yeare is very little for her clothes concydering how every body goes heare ; yett I would nott give him order to give her any more untell I know your mind ; for I find by one of your letters that you reckon she shall cost you but 30 pound a yeare in all . . . Mis Ise sayes that there was an allowance payed for Mall's washing beside her diett & she had the helpe of a mayde beside, which noebody will lett her have for 18 pound a yeare.' 'Next week Mall goes downe toe wth my child . . . June 24, 1647. truly I thinke her sisters would be all three gladd to have her if thay were in a condition to take her, for they love her very well.' 'I hear Mall hath a great mind to y^e guilte Aug. 10, 1647. cabbenett that was your mother's . . . soe I entend to give itt her . . . truly I like her y^e best of them all ; she is very playne, butt hath a great deale of witt & is nott att all proude butt very thrifty & willing to do any thing for any body.' After this Mary has gone to be with Cary, and Ralph is to allow 30%. for her diet and 15%. for her clothes.

Poor Betty seems to have been generally disapproved of in the family, and probably not without reason. Mary, ill and anxious, was not inclined to humour the girls : 'they say April 15, 1647. Betty is much y^e worst natured & willfullest of them all . . . a pestelent wench. . . . she desired me to putt her in April 21, 1647. repaire for she wanted clothes from head to foote bothe linnen and Woolen. . . . I have writt to Will to ask Mrs. Alcock whatt she wants and provide itt for her for if I should buy her clothes my selfe they would expect better then ordinary ; soe I will meddle as little as I can ; hear hath been many Complaynts from your sisters of Nan fud how y^t she neavor did helpe any one of your sisters and y^t she sayes you left her onely to looke to my boy Jack and how that she thinks you are bounde eyther to keepe her or provide for her

as long as she lives for thatt she knowes itt was your Mothers intention itt should be soe.'

May 20,
1647

Lady Verney recommends that Betty should have a fixed allowance of 12*l*. a year for clothes, 'for all heare keepes theyr daughters in silk: y^e D^r's Wife y^e other day made nue silk gownes for every one of her daughters & I asure you betty doth not point of wearing any other, & Mis. Ise & all of them think itt fitt itt should be soe, & truly I cannott Innagion which way you can keep her in silk att that rate.' 'Now whatt course to take with Betty I vow I cannott Imagion, for upon noe conditions in the world I will nott have her; & where to place her I know nott, for she growes up apace & thinks her selfe a woeman allready. I think we had best advise with her frends whatt to doe with her & to place her where they shall thinke fitt, for where soever we should place her if we make itt an act of our owne we shall be condemned in itt. . . . They say she is so cross & willfull y^t noebody that knowes her is willing to take her, I pray God make my children good & enable us to provide for them, as well for theyr eldest Brother's sake as theyr owne. . . . Betty is of a cross proud lazy disposition . . . I heare she poyntes much of being wth me.' Mary Verney speaks to Sir Thomas Elmes about Betty's living with them. 'I told him that Betty desired itt, & that I had rather she should be wth his wife then any body elce, because she was grave and descreete & knew how to governe her better then others, & that he should be payed for her diett. . . . Soe when he found he should nott loose by her he told me she should be very wellcom . . . but I beleeeve twenty five pound a yeare will be the least that they will take for her diett; & truly I doe nott see how you can give them less to find her in washing & firing & all.'

Betty however, when taken away from Claydon and Nan Fudd who had brought her up, turned desperately homesick. There is a long, quaint letter from Mall to Lady Verney written from Green's Norton, the Elmes' place, where Cary and Mall were staying. Brother Edmund, too, had come over on a few days' visit from Misterton, and had evidently

been causing much merriment and making himself greatly beloved.

'My Deare Sister, Just now my wicked brother Mun is Sept. 1647
com to us, but wee have all moust scrat out his very eyes out
of his balle pate, so that hee must see by the holes, or not att
all. Hee thretenes to give mee a Spanish fig, but if hee doth
not please me beter then hee hath don sence hee cam hether,
I will give him a Spanish pill and macke him giddy, so that
hee shall never find the waie to Misterten to torment you
any more; but I think as I shall not neede to macke him
gidy, for that hee hath binne a grete while, & I feare doth
groe every day more gider then other. For hee had not binn
halfe a nower with us but he was a showing mee his faver
as my Cousin gave him, & att that Instant he toock gidy &
blushed to see as I laft att him. I am som thing fearefull
of that parte, but I live in hoopoes as it will never be ac-
complished. My sister bety cam hether last Monday, but is
so wery of beeing heare, as she had rather live att Claydon
all dayes of her life then to stay heare. Shee cries &
tackes on, & is so sad as you cannot Immagen, & my sis
Gardiner & my selfe . . . hath treyed all the waies as poso-
bell wee could to perswade her to stay & trey tell shee
comes from lundon againe, but all we can doo will not
worcke of her. So that my sis gardiner desired mee to
right you word of it, for shee would goo to Claydon when
I goo to lundon. And truly I doo think as shee will all
moust grive her selfe to deth when wee are gon; for I think
as my sister gardiner will goo be foare my sister Elmes. But
I can not excues my sister bety's faly att all, for if I shuld
all the world mite condem mee for it & very Justly, for it
showes a gret dell of Indiscreshon in her to doo as shee doth
. . . . Shee sayes as shee had rather be wheare I am then
with any of my sisters. I confes as my sister Elmes whent
to qwick a waie to her att the furist, & that is not the waie as
shee must have youst, & so my sister gardiner & I told her.
They are both of a very hasty disposishons, & so much as
they will never a gree together, & my sis bety is sory as shee
did not consider of it bee foare shee cam, but truly my sister

& my brother hath hinn very cind to her, but all will not perswade her to stay heare, & my brother would have his wife to send her hom on Mundy nex, but I am confident as shee will repent of her folly when shee goes beger. But shee sayes as shee had rather live att Claydon then heare, or att my auntt D^{rs}, for shee hats that as bad as this. . . . My brother S^r edmund had all moust tore my letter, & I told him as hee would sarved your letter as hee would doo you if it lay in his power. Wee doo wish him with you, or with his M^{rs} againe, for heare is no liveing with him hee is so rud. Now hee sayes as you sayed as wee shuld be a wery of him befoare night, & truly I am & so wee are all.'

Sept. 28,
1647.

Matters seem to have come to a crisis, for a day or two later Lady Elmes writes herself to Lady Verney that Betty had gone the day before. 'I confes the suddennes of hur being wery of my company seemes sumthing strainge to me cousedowring with what kindness I yoused hur. . . . She was soe violent to be gon as that she wresolved to goe home a foote wrathor then to stay heare. For my part I thenck hur past being soe very a baby as to doe this owght of chilldishnes, which made me to take it ill from hur. And a nother thing is that she sayes as I am passhionat & soe is she, which makes hur to thencke as we to showlde never a gre to gethor, but this I can saifely sweare, Let my pashou be never soe great I never shoed any att all to hur . . . Pray send munsy back againe quickly to me.'

Oct. 3,
1647.

It was annoying for Lady Verney to receive these letters, just when she thought Betty was safely disposed of, and in writing to her husband she expressed her disapprobation of the girl very freely. 'I must tell you in how great Choller I am with your sister Betty . . . I spake with her before I did any thing in itt, & she told me thatt she should think her selfe very hapy to goe to live with Pegg. . . . If I pass by Claydon I shall lett her know a peece of my mind.' It is suspected that, 'twas I'udd's plot,' hoping, by getting back her former charge, to become indispensable.

Oct. 21,
1647.

A little later Lady Verney describes an interview she had with the culprit Betty on her way to town. 'She is a

very forward young mayde . . . she was nott at all sencible of any thing I could say to her, & yett I told her I did nott know any body that would now take her . . . butt she was nott att all moved att itt, butt was as soone as she was out of the roome as merry as evor she was in her life.'

Ralph replies: 'I do much admire at Betties folly since she is soe straingly in love with her owne Will, let her rest with Mrs. Francis, where she may have leasure enough to repent her Folly. . . . I pray god she proove not a sister Tom, beleeve mee shee is too like him.'

Nov. 3,
1647.

Later Dr. Denton writes: 'Harry hath gold in both pocketts, & gave Betty 10s.'; and on another occasion when much pleased with her he is 'very fierce to give her a gounne,' if his uncle would furnish her with a guitar. But the conclusion of the matter was not very satisfactory, as he ended with 'tryeing to get the money for the gown out of Roads'! And Dr. Denton says that he must 'leave Harry & Will to tugge for the payment.' Lady Verney had by this time returned to France, and Ralph writes from Blois—'If itt bee thought for Bettie's advantage to bee sent to a scole, though itt be deare I am content to be putt to that charge. Itt seemes the mistress demands 25*l*. a yeare for Dielt teaching & all other things.' He then requests that Betty may be fitted out with clothes and placed at the school. 'I pray advise her & charme her too concerning her cariage there.'

May 10,
1649.

Poor Betty seems not to have approved of this change of abode. Her uncle writes—'She is a strange perverse girle & soe averse from goinge thither that she doth not sticke to threaten her owne death by her owne hands, though my girles (who have beene there) give all the commendation that can be . . . of that schoole.' A few days later: 'On Friday last with many teares & much regrett Betty went to schoole, but I droled it out & there I left her.' Ralph addresses a serious letter of remonstrance to the girl, and is anxious to know whether she will be taught religion; but another letter from Dr. Denton says his wife has been to see her, and 'Betty is Betty still.'

After this it is really a comfort to hear of a complete

reformation. In October her uncle goes to see her, and writes: 'It was a visitt well bestowed, for in my life time I ne'er saw soe great a change in countenance, fashion, humor & disposition (& all for the better) in any body, neyther could I imagine it possible it could have beene wrought soe soone. She now seems to be as contented, as ere before she seemed discontented (and in earnest it was the most bedlam bare that ere I hampered), and if wife can judge . . . she keeps her cloaths as well & as cleanly as can be.' In December '49 there is a 'glass combe case' sent to Sir Ralph in a parcel from home 'wrought by Betty Verney,' by which he is to see 'shee hath not altogether lost her time.' The girl must have had good stuff in her to improve thus decidedly.

Mr. Alport did at length succeed in getting out of the Fleet, and was able to take his wife down to Overton Manor, and at home he was his best self once more. Sue writes to
 June 1648. Ralph: 'My long expected happynes to see home is com att last, I have binne in Cheshire this ten days, where I find a pittifull reuened house for want of liveing in, not only so butt plundered besids. I found nothing in it but bare walls. I must bee contented with them till Sir Hugh Calvley's debts are payed, & happy shall I bee yf my husband may continew heere. Itt is but a leetle house, butt very pleasant. I cañott brag y^t I am lickly to tarry heer, I feere this happynes will nott last long, for ther is an execution out against my hus for my lord of Loughborough, & Sir Hugh together. . . . Pray give my treu love & sarvice to my sister, whom I had writen to, butt I have had to much company ever sene I cam downe y^t I have nott time to settle my selfe. I am a sorry housekeeper, I have nothing aboutt mee, nott so much as a cow, nor dare nott meddle with any yett, butt am forced to keepe a tenaunt in my house & by all of him.'

Susan was not too poor, however, to send Lady Verney commissions to do for her in Paris. 'I give my brother & you most harty thanks for the Cloke that is sent me against winter . . . as far as thurty shillings will goe, so much I will bestow in gloves, ye mony I use to loose att gleeke
 July 21,
 1648.

so this shall now goe for bables. . . . Cap. Salmon was so good natured as to come downe wth mee hee desires y^u to except of his humble sarvices. my love to both y^e boys.'

Dr. Denton writes to Sir Ralph—'Sis Alport is your humblest servant and refers herself wholly to you to send her linnen or noe linnen. . . . She is now with childe and in a world of troubles besides, he is over head and ears in debt for Sir Hugh Caulveley's debts, judgements and executions one in the neck of another, soe that shee thinkes she shall scarce have bread within 6 months. Noebody can help them out but myselfe, and that by my interest in Orlando [Bridgeman] whom I have ingaged and have proffered Alport all the assistance I can; and he (though he understands business as well as any) is yet so sottish as I doubt he will stand very much in his own light.'

It is a pleasure, after so many worrying applications from Susan to Ralph for money, to find a little note in his handwriting—'I writ sist. Alport thanks for offring mee her £600, but I would not accept it, least in these ill times I should not bee able to pay her constantly.'

The 'leetle house butt very pleasant' still exists, though sadly modernised. In Susan's time it was a half-timbered, gabled house, projecting in the upper storey, with a pointed stone arch over the moat. Built in a sheltered nook, it is thus described in March 1892: 'Overton Manor is about a mile from Malpas Church, down hill the whole way. There is a well-defined, narrow moat, not more than four or five feet wide, which incloses about an acre of ground, an imposing row of new pig-styes between the moat and the house, and a very modern front door; but at the back, completely hemmed in with new buildings, are two rather pretty gable-ends of the old house.'

Susan did not long enjoy her home; she died, as the old notebook says, 'of her 3rd child'; 'they were all still born.'

Her husband writes of her loss: 'You hoped to have heard of my poor geirle's safe deliverance, butt with a really afflicted soule I am enforced to returne you the most truly sadd account . . . for itt hath pleased Almighty god in his

Oct. 10,
1650.Mar. 10,
1650.Feb. 7,
1651.

Judgment (for my great sins) to lay the greatest & most heavy affliction uppon mee, that ever was on any man.' He then goes on to tell of her being taken ill, mentioning 'the gentlewomen with her, amongst which was Mrs. Poole, a sister to my Lrd of Shrosberry, and Mrs. Dutton, Sir Jo: Reinold's daughter, whom I presume you know. . . . Shee sayd aloud—Now I thank God I am delivered—calling mee to kisse her; the child had life in it & stirred an hower after it was borne. . . . shee to all our apprehensions was safe layd in bed; but within a quarter of an hour shee faynted, & . . . could nott bee revived butt a very little space, & faynt again which she continued about three houres, & then itt pleased god shee dyed, which was about twelve A' clocke on Saturday night 1st Feb. . . . which was the fatalls houer that ever befell mee. . . . God sanctify my sorrowes to mee. . . . Itt was no little addi^{ti}on to my troubles to finde that shee could nott bee kept so long unburied untill I might have provided all things fitting for funerall. Shee was buried on Munday about 3 aclock in Malpas church, in my owne vault wher I intend (god willing) & hope shortly to ly myselfe, accompanied with all the gentry in this cuntry thither; wher preached Mr. Holland, a most reverend divine, one who hath bin much conversant with her ever since shee came hither, & administred the sacra^t to us not 10 days before; & truly hee did her all right in her commendacon, which was justly very high & I beleeve almost above any of her sex. I am yett a willing prisoner to my greefe in my disconsolate & now altogether comfortlesse chamber.' The beautiful old church of Malpas, on the top of the steep hill up which the sad funeral procession toiled, is one of the most interesting churches in Cheshire. Here Richard Alport's father was buried in 1624, and his own name and that of several of his children are to be found in the parish register. The record of Susan's burial is lost; during the Civil War the entries are imperfect, and some were copied afterwards from loose sheets into the book.

The further histories of Pen, Peg, Cary, Moll, and Betty are fully set forth in the succeeding letters.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PASSING OF KING CHARLES AND OF DAME MARY.

1648-1650.

THE meeting between Ralph and his wife on her return to France in April 1648 must have been in some ways a sad one. The mother's grief for the loss of her little girl would spring afresh at the sight of the empty nest where she had left her bright little Peg; and the baby boy whom she had hoped to bring back with her was dead also.

They stayed for several weeks at Paris on their way south, partly no doubt in order to meet Edmund, who was soon to embark on his last journey to Ireland, and perhaps because of a natural shrinking on Mary's part from coming back to Blois. A few weeks after their return thither she writes of being weary of the place. Ralph went by himself to Tours to seek fresh quarters, but could find nothing suitable, and they had to resign themselves to remaining at Blois. The dulness and stagnation of a French country town where, as Ralph declares, 'no newes is ever heard' and 'nothing ever comes to pass in this woful place,' must have told heavily on one fresh from the interesting society of London—seeing and hearing some of the best men and women of that most stirring time—society in which she herself was so well fitted to join and indeed to shine. When one reads how her uncle-doctor brought 'parliament-men' and lawyers to her little lodging, it is clear how he reckoned on the power of her charm and capacity for business to influence and persuade them. Now she had nothing to do but to look after her little household and her two boys, who were most of the day with their tutor, the French *pasteur*,

July 5,
1649.

and to cheer the tedious life of her husband. The English exiles come and go; the young Earl of Strafford, Lord Beauchamp, Sir Hugh Cholmondely, Sir John Osborne (afterwards Duke of Leeds), Mr. Pierrepont, Mr. Ogilvy; none will stay at Blois who can help it. Mrs. Sherard writes to her, 'I find by the Dr that you are verrey mallincaley since you went over last. I pray have a care as you imbrace not that hewmor, for it is both trobulsom & dangerus.' Sir Ralph has countless letters still to write about the never-ending complexities of his money matters; Dr. Denton is, as ever, his trusted adviser, though he sometimes declines to take the responsibility of decisions; 'I will not teach my grandam to shoe goslings; you can send Pen (or any body else) an answer that shall signifie nothinge, when you have a mind to it, as well as ever a Dr. in Angleterre!'

The letters that passed between Ralph and other English exiles are chiefly of a sad complexion: dealing with the news from home and the difficulties of maintaining themselves. But, in contrast to these, Sir Henry Puckering Newton is of a most lively turn of mind; he takes very lightly the dangers of travelling—'When I come swimming doune again to Blois'—and sports like a butterfly on the troubled surface of society, apparently as little depressed by the course of events in England as if he were on a pleasure-tour. He writes from Orleans: 'I have taken time to consider till teusday which way to bee *dépourillé* with most contentement, and then Blois, Paris or Rouen, Devill do thy worst.' France was by no means an abode of peace, and even from dull little Blois Ralph writes: 'If these Troubles should force me to leave this Tounne . . . at present I know not whither to goe to a better, yet the changes of Warre being various, peradventure I may be compelled to some sudden remove.'

Nov. 28,
1648.

The progress of public events at home was most disquieting. Dr. Denton writes: 'Here is at present a strange consternation of spiritts amongst all people, for the Army hath interposed about the treatie, and the generall expectation

is for worse and more sad times then ever.' 'Drake is att Dec. 7, this present in the hands of the Army with many other 1648. members, some say 50, others more, others lesse, which was seised uppon yesterday goinge to the house. What the issue will be God knowes. . . . It is an ill time now to treat about land; . . . noe man will touch uppon that stringe, for the Army is att the Parliament doores, and secure all the members they can light on that they suppose will vote contrary to their remonstrance, particularly they have seized of your acquaintance Drake, Wenman, Ruddier, Nat fines, Prinne, Sir G. Gerard, and I know not how many besides.' After some details about business the Doctor continues his account a little sarcastically: 'The Army doe not to-day as yesterday catch and imprison the members . . . but now they only stand att the doore with 2 roubles, and if their names be in such a rouble then they may enter, if in the other then they may not. Soe that none enter now but our frends, and you shall see we will doe righteous things at last. Most of the secured members lay in Hell last night, and are now gone to the generall. There is scarce enough left free to make a house.'

The party in power was bitterly hostile to the King. The Jan. 2, Commons passed an ordinance instituting a High Court of Justice by whom he was to be tried. The Upper House, or what remained of it, made a futile attempt at resistance. Dr. Denton wrote, 'I heare the L^{ds} on Tuesday last voted all null since ye army siezed ye members . . . It is not to be told ye confusion we are in, y^e L^{ds} have adjourned for a weeke; the Commons now declare the legislative power to be in them only. I pray God send peace on earth & write all o^r names in y^e booke of life. Deare Raph I am thine in peace or war.' 'A[lexander] D[enton]'s creditors . . . see there is nothingo Jan. 11, but land to be had, & they will rather venture all then take 1649. it, soe troublesome & cumbersome a thinge is land growne now, it is soe liable to quarter & taxes, & makes one's estate soe visible & consequently the persons more liable to sequestration, for it is almost a crime to have an estate in these days. . . . I doubt before this come to you our

Jan. 18,
1649.

Kinge will be defunct, and it is feared the sword will govern instead of the crowne. The complexion of our confusions growes every day more sad & black then other. Y^e scaffolds are buildinge for the tryall of the Kinge, & y^e terme putt of for 20 daies for that very reason. It is almost every man's opinion that nothing will satisfie but his head, & I am clearly of y^e same opinion except God miraculously divert or divide, or confound counsell. Our divines preach generally against these proceedings & not without great vehemence, & some of them begin to writt against them alsoe. Our cavalier L^{ts} have offered to ingage life & fortune for y^e King's performance of whatever he shall grant of their demands. The Scotch have mediated & declared absolutely against it, yett nothinge will doe, they are resolved of their course for ought I can find.'

Jan. 2,
1649.

Even Sir Roger Burgoyne, strong parliamentarian as he was, writes: 'I could be content to be a monke or hermit, rather than a statesman at the present conjunction of affairs. . . . What will become of us in England God only knowes. The passages of late presage the saddest of times.'

Jan. 18,
1649.

Dr. Denton writes again: '. . . It is now the dismallest time here that ever our eyes beheld. Noe mediation by Ministry, Scotland, Cavaliers, L^{ts}, or of any body else for ought I can heare, can dissuade from doinge execucon uppon y^e kinge. I heare the Queene of Bohemia is cominge over if not landed, her son's mediation hath not yett prevailed any thinge, & I doubt hers will prevaile as little. Y^e confusions & distractions are every where soe greate that I know not where to wish my selfe but in Heaven. . . . It is thought there will be a risinge or combustion in every country of y^e kingdome at once, soe generally are people's hearts agst these proceedings.'

Jan. 25,
1649.

Feb. 29,
1649.

Ralph received tidings of the final tragedy from Mr. Cockram, an English merchant at Rouen. 'I doubt not but ere this you have heard the dolefull news of our King's death, whoe was beheaded laste teusday was seaven night, at two of the clock, afternoone, before Whitehall, the moste barbarous Aekt, & lamentable sight that ever any Christians did

beholde. The Numerous garde of horse and foote of Armed Tygers did binde the hands and stopp the mouths of many Thousand beholders, but could not keepe their eyes from weeping, for none but harts of flinte could forbear. His maies^{tie} appeared uppon the scaffold with admirable constancie noe way dismayed, did make a very worthy speach shewing his Innocency of what hee was accused & condemned for; & yett with greate charitie did freely forgive all his enemies in rehearsing the example of S^t John. And to satisfy the people concerninge his Religion hee theare declared that hee dyed a trew Christian according to the open profession of the Church of England, as it was lefte by the deceased king his father: And soe with sundry expressions of piety & godly exhortations hee submitted to that wofull ende, which makes all honest menn's harts to bleede; And is a beginning of England's greater Miseric than ever hath bin hitherto.'

Westminster School was at this time strongly Royalist, and amongst the boys conspicuous for their devotion to the King were the great-nephews of Sir Edmund Verney's old friend, Sir William Uvedale. Unable to find vent for their loyalty the Westminster boys held a meeting for prayer on the morning of Charles's execution; one wishes that the King could have known the touching way in which their sympathy was shown him. On that terrible day all work must have been suspended; before its close the King was beyond the need of earthly comfort; but Robert Uvedale's devotion to his memory was to be shown in a striking way before his schooldays were over. A former Rector of Middle Claydon,¹ who was a Westminster boy when the nineteenth century was young, remembered an instance of a very different spirit. The boys were made to attend the service in the Abbey, to commemorate '“the Martyrdom of the Blessed King Charles the First,” given up (as upon this day) to the violent outrages of wicked men, to be despitely used and at the last murdered by them,' and while in the words of the Prayer-book they were further exhorted to

¹ The Rev. W. R. Fremantle, afterwards Dean of Ripon.

'reflect upon so foul an act with horror and astonishment,' the boy next to him, Trelawney, whose ancestors had stoutly resisted King Charles, was muttering between his teeth—'Bloody tyrant,' in a suppressed passion of indignation.

For nearly a month there are no letters from Sir Roger or Dr. Denton, when their silence is thus accounted for: 'The newes . . . of most publique concernement I am confident is longe since come to yo^r eares; as the kinge beinge executed by Whitehall yeisterday being 3 weekes since, I had not failed to have given you notice of it the same weeke, but that the Dr^e would not suffer me to send the letter I had written, there being a generall stoppage of all letters,' and Dr. Denton adds 'We are now in the maddest world that ever we mortalls sawe.'—'If I am not disappointed you shall have the king's booke [Eikon Basilike]. It hath beene hitherto at 8s. and 10s. price. . . . It hath beene much suppressed, the first printer and impression plundered and presses broken.' 'The king's booke, with his deportment, indurance, att his tryall and on the scaffold, hath amazed the whole kingdome, to see soe much courage, Xstianity, and meekness in one man. The women generally are in mourninge for him, ye men dare not, only some few.' Sir Henry Newton writes from Paris: 'I find a Court heere sadd & hugely discomposed, but as much for want of money as for anything else; their poverty must needes bee very much, when to this houre the Qu: & D. of Yorke's footmen & many others are not in mourning. I have kiss'd all their hands, & passed a whole day betweene dukes & civillites.'

There was great indignation in France. John Foss, a merchant at Nantes, puts into a postscript to Ralph: 'Pray, Sir, writt not in the superscription *anglois*, flor thatt nation is soe much in hatred, thatt he cannott pass the streets in saultye.' Dr. Kirton writes from Paris: 'The army and Parliament have sett out a manifest to lett the world know why they have kill'd their king and made themselves a Republicke. It is two sheotes of paper, and to be turned by their order into Latin, French, and Duch. I know not what it may

prove in other Tongues, but they whoe reade it in English find it poore stuffe.'

The bad news of public affairs in England must have weighed all the more heavily on Ralph, as his wife's health caused him growing anxiety. Some months after her return to France she fell dangerously ill of what Ralph calls 'a kind of apoplexy or Lethargy,' in which she lost her sight for a time. She recovered from this illness, but was in delicate health; the doctor advised her drinking the waters at June 1649. Bourbonne les Bains; they spent some weeks there, and expected to have the company of the sprightly Sir Henry Newton, who wrote to Ralph that he was anxious to 'returne time enough to tipples with my lady at Bourbon, against when I have resolved for so much water that I promise you to deale in none till then, not thinking it an element to bee us'd that way except phisically.' 'I am growne very weary of good veale and wine; my mind runnes much on water, therefore beleewe me, Sr, I sitt in thornes untill I can bee a man of my word both unto you and my lady.' In spite of these fine phrases, he never came, and in his next letter it appears that he had gone over to England.

Dr. Denton expresses his satisfaction that Mary is better, and hopes that she need drink no more—'it's possible to ^{Aug. 1, 1649} have a surfeit of water as well as wine. Sir Richard Winn hath mett with it, not to the life but to the death.' He 'cannot gett a booke for Landladie's pallett'; the works on controversial divinity that the doctor so zealously recommended may well have been heavy reading after the baths in the hot valley of Bourbonne in July. They went to Paris for a time, and then Sir Ralph was anxious to take his wife to the South. 'Shee should order you better,' wrote Dr. Denton, 'then to lett you ramble like Tom a Bedlam ten leagues beyond the wide world's end.'

Avignon, he heard, was visited by 'les trois fléaux de Dieu'—famine, pestilence, and the sword—and the plague was also at Nismes, but he hoped to get to Montpellier. Sir Henry laughs at him for his roving spirit; he says he has received his last letter, 'but where hee is that sent it the Lord ^{Aug. 13, 1649.}

knowes; pray God hee bee in an honest place, since he dares not owne it. . . . I perceiue you doe wander and rove upp and downe, one knowes not where to haue you. You would fauine lay the cause upon my good ladic's water drinking, but 'tis your owne good will to the frontiniack which your God-father K. James infused into you & you are wild after, makes you run such madd journeys as Montpellier. . . . Pray God when you return to Blois when they heare of your tippling they doe not shutt the gates against you—you know they are ticklish men of the guard—but I hope by my sober cariage & example there . . . to work so on you & the poeple that you may be both reclam'd & admitted again. But (without fooling) I am seriously sory you goe so farr off, . . . my purse willbee too light & my cloak bagg too heauie to follow you.'

Mary has been shopping in Paris for Mrs. Sherard, and Ralph writes to her that 'my wife . . . hath ventured to present you with a paire of French trimed gloves, a Fan, a paire of Tweezes & an enamiled Box with patches; I blush at her boldnesse but more at my own Folly, for suffering of her, but you know she weares the Breeches & will doe what she list.'

Tom turns up at Paris again. 'My dayly study now is to serve God, and to avoid the banquier apprehending mee;' he is 'forced to lye in bed, being destitute of bootes and stockings.' When at length he returns to England 'he follows his old tricks still.' For a time he appeared 'cliquant & in wonderful equipage both for cloathes and money,' but it was only due to what he 'threatened' out of his aunt Ursula (and probably from unworthy gains as a spy), and then came the usual *da capo*—prison and pious penitent epistles, of which Dr. Denton writes: 'to see now his letters you would thinke him a St. or a preacher at least. He goes far that never turnes. God can doe much. Paul persecuted till he could noe longer kick against the pricks.' But no miracle of reformation was to change Tom's wretched career.

Sept. 7,
1640.

Dr. Denton writes from Oxford: 'Two daies since the souldiers of this garrison discarded their officers & are all turned levellers, & it is thought most of the regiments of the

army are of the same mould.' Sir Roger also writes: 'The Sept. 19,
1649. Levellers have begun to play some more pranks about Oxford, but it is hoped that they will suddenly be quasht, although some much doubt it; it is pittie that souldiers formerly so unanimous in the cause of God, should now begin to clash one with another, but it is verily thought that there are some knaves amongst them which I hope God will one day discover. They talke much of the Kinge of Scotlande having the better upon the seas, & that Ormonde hath beaten Ld. gen. Crumwell since his coming over, the rather because he hath sent over for fresh supplies . . . but I presume you are too discreet to bestow your beliefe upon any fabulous report.' However incredulous about political news, Sir Roger seems to have no doubt about another story. 'Great store of crown crabs were taken in Cornwall among their pilchards'; four of them were sent from Plymouth to London; they were 'as bigg as halfe crownes, have shells like crabbs, feet like ducks, faces like men, & crowues on their heads. theire faces & crownes seem as if they were carved upon their shells.'

Mary was getting gradually worse, but many merry messages still pass between her and the good Doctor, sent and received by Ralph. 'You must needs send landlady over in wonderfull post hast to me, for I hear her old prosecutors the Hydes are makeinge enquiry after me, & except she come to out scold them, I must goe to Billingsgate and I doubt I shall not match them nor her there. I thinke I mumpt her there!' The Doctor has at last succeeded in letting their London house for 65*l*. 'for this next yeare to the Countesse of Downe.' His absence about their affairs 'hath so routed my business that I am like a crowe in a mist, or rather like an owl at noon.' He attacks Mary again, who asks about some commissions he was to do for her: 'She is a lyinge slutt . . . for I doe not or will not remember that Oct. 15,
1649. ever she writt to me for nuttmeggs; how ever, tell her she shall neyther have nuttmeggs nor stockings, nor meat neither by my good will, nor money which is worse, nor anythinge but druggs till she write her longe—longe—longe promised letter.'

Sir Henry Newton, meaning to bring his wife to Blois, asks what Lady Verney would advise, as an 'old house-keeper in France,' for the ordering of their affairs, and 'what stulle or what cattlle' to bring out. Ralph replies that his wife is very angry at being called old housekeeper; 'had you called her old woeman she would never have forgiven you such an injurie. You know a woeman can never bee old (at least not willingly, nor in her owne oppinion); did you dread her displeasure but halfe soe much as I doe, beeleeve me you would run post heather to make your peace.'

Nov. 14,
1649.

They have a sick friend, Lord Alington, at Tours, whom they wish to have with them to nurse him, but his man writes that though he greatly desires the good air and good company now in Blois, yet 'my Lord makes little use, nor will doe these 15 dayes, of any ayre save that of a good fire but what . . . stays my Lord heere, is, that should we runne through all France a more warme convenient chamber; a quietter house; a neatter woeman, & good meate better drest were not to be found by us. The woeman is so excellent in making jellies, hartening brothes & all other things necessary for a person that is sicke, that my L^d could not be better in his owne house at Horse Heath.' Later on Lord Alington begs for the loan of 'the King's booke in English; his Lpp hath it in French, but desireth much to reade it in the King's owne tearmes.' No doubt as to the authenticity of the 'Icon Basilicæ' appears in the letters.

After weeks of suspense about Edmund, they receive the terrible news of his death and of the massacre at Drogheda. There are some pathetic letters from Doll Leeke about her own and Mary's sorrow; she says she has now lost every one belonging to her who was engaged in the Civil War. She speaks of Edmund as 'our dear Companion & faithfull friend. I cannot express how unhappy I am, but I will leve you to ges by your self who I know had an intire affection for him.' Sir Ralph constantly assures Dr. Denton hat his wife is better, and Dr. is planning how 'she should be bled after Xmas, & in March enter into a steele diett,' but

she was getting beyond the reach of his affectionate care and his terrible remedies.

Sir Ralph writes to a neighbour, Mr. Hatcher : ' I was ^{Dec 13,} such a blockhead that I forgot to tell you that on Satterday ^{1649.} next (my wife being ill) a friend will give us a sermon & the Sacrament (after the honest old way at home) & if either yourselfe or son please to communicate with us you shall bee very welcome.' Dr. Denton had written : ' I doubt my poore landlady will have *febrem lentam* w^{ch} may in time consume her;' but, although not known till after her death, it was a disease of the lungs that was killing her. The move to Montpellier had been given up, as the small-pox was prevalent there : and although when the spring came on the journey was again talked of, she was by that time too ill to attempt it, and it seems strange that Ralph should have thought poor Mary fit for it. Apparently he could not take in the possibility of death for her ; for twenty years they had been together, for better for worse, in sickness and in health, in poverty and in riches ; there had never been a cloud between them, she had stood by him on all the difficult occasions when there was risk to be run, and danger and penury to face, and above all, that which is most difficult to bear, the doubt whether a course which you take against the wishes and advice of all your friends is really the wisest. But the burden had been too heavy for her sweet, loving, delicate nature, and now, at the early age of 33, she sank under it. Dr. Denton, so tenderly attached to his niece, had written continually about her health and his fears for her, but when the blow fell Ralph seemed thunderstruck. He wrote but one line to his uncle, telling him of the fact ; he, ^{May 20,} the long-winded, the prolix explainer in everything, ^{1650.} could not find a single word. It is the old old story of Love's sorrow and Love's self-reproach ; and Lowell's lament for his wife might have been written by Ralph about Mary.

How was I worthy so divine a loss,
 Deepening my midnights, kindling all my morns ?
 Why waste such precious wood to make my cross,
 Such far-sought roses for my crown of thorns ?

And when she came how earned I such a gift ?
 Why spent on me, a poor earth-delving mole,
 The fireside sweetnesss, the heavenward lift,
 The hourly mercy of a woman's soul ?

In Sir Ralph's calendar of letters addressed to Dr. Denton are the following entries :

'¹⁵/₇ May 1650. I writ Dr. word I received his letter, but could write of no businesse, Wife beeing soe ill.'

'²²/₇ May 1650. Oh my my deare deare.

'²⁹/₇ May 1650. Friday the ²⁰/₁₀ May (at 3 in ye morning) was the Fatall day & Hower. The disease a consumption.

. . I shall not need to relate with what a Religious and a cheerful joy & courage this now happy & most glorious saint, left this unhappy & most wicked world. . . . I intreate you presently to pay one Mr. Preswell (a silke man in Paternoster Row) about forty shillings, which hee said she owed for something taken upp there, though she could never call it to her remembrance. Besides the legacies . . . she appointed Tenn pounds to bee payed to the stock of the Poore of Claydon, and Three pounds to Mr. Joyce the Minister, and Twenty pounds unto yourselfe, which she desired you to accept as a Testimony of her most unfeigned Love & affection, and with this earnest request, that for her sake you would perpetuate your friendshipp, care, & kindnesse both to mee and mine. I pray pay Mr. Joyce & give order to W. R. to pay the Poore & your selfe with the first money. As for Mourninge I shall only desire you presently to take upp your owne, & also such others as you (by the customes now used in England, by persons of my Estate & Condition) thinke fit & necessary to bee given for the Best of Wives. . . . The greate & sad afflictions now uppon me, make me utterly unable to think how I had best dispose of myselfe & children, therefore besides your prayers for our comfort & direction, bee pleased to send your advise at large to your perplexed, distressed & most afflicted servant.' He also notes : 'M. Cordell has this day sent the Dr. the relation at large of her deportment in her sicknesse & at her death in 6 sheets of paper.' Two days later comes

a deed for Mary to sign, 'also a letter from the Dr. to her.'

There is a painful paper a fortnight after her death, addressed by Ralph to Dr. Denton: 'having now passed neare 40 yeares of my pilgrimage, & had my share both of publique & private afflictions, & even at this very instant groaning under the weight of the greatest greife that ever yet befell me; 'tis high time to search out what iniquities have separated me & my god; and what sinns have made him take away good things from me.' 'You know I have now beene neare seaven yeares abroad, within w^{ch} time (and a little before) my good and carefull parents, 2 parts of 3 of my innocent children, and my best beloved Brother, were taken from me; soe that I had neither Father, Mother, Daughter nor kinde Brother to assist me in this unhappy Exile. And yet I thanke my God I was not quite forsaken, for hee was pleased to raise upp you to bee my true and faithfull friende in England, and in a very plentifull measure to supply all other defects by the vertue and affection of my Wife, who was not only willing to suffer for and with mee heere, but by her most exemplary goodnesse and patience both help'd and taught me to support my otherwise almost insupportable Burden. But alas, what shall I now doe! for she being too good to bee kept any longer from her heavenly rest, & I being too unworthy the continuance of soe greate a Blessing, am now deprived of her, and (as if her crowne had encreased my cares) her reward is become my punishment. What course shall I take to reconcile my selfe unto my Maker, & devert the Dreggs of his Fury from mee? he hath covered mee with ashes, filled mee with Bitternesse & made mee drunken with wormwood, & yet I must needes confesse the Lord is just & righteous, for I have rebelled against all his commandements. . . . Being this day to receive y^e Sacrement, (y^e better to fit me for it) I lately made a Review of my life, wherein though I found enough to make mine Eyes Run downe with Rivers of Water, yet least the love to myselfe or sinns cause mee to bee partiall unto either, I must beeseech & conjure you (who know more of me & my actions

then any creature living) . . . to tell mee plainly wherein you have observed me to bee faulty, & espetially whether any man hath or is like to suffer unjustly either by or for mee.'

The 'Review' contains a long and painfully elaborate examination into past money transactions with tenants and others, setting forth the reasons and the rules by which he was guided and his readiness to make restitution if the Doctor thinks he was to blame; 'the pane taken out of Radcliffe Church window' years before, a boyish piece of mischief, and a rather hard bargain about Newman's cow, are enumerated in his morbid conscientiousness at this time of overwhelming sorrow. Even a poor little unpaid bill of 40s. to a brewer in London weighs on his mind, although, as he says, he sent 'neare 20 times unto him to fetch his money but he came not,' and he is the more sorry as he knows neither his name nor dwelling. His trouble is much increased by the death of his good friend M. Testard the minister, which he announces in a postscript. The Doctor's reply is long and affectionate:

June 20,
1650.

'It seems I cozened y^u wⁿ I turned a scurvy sollicitour, & y^u have cozened me in takinge me to be a Confessor & casuist. I confesse the Apostle's p^rcept (viz. confesse y^r sinns one to another) I thinke ought not to be monopolized by the priests only, but everyone is left at libertie to whom to doc it; but wherefor to me, who . . . have swallowed downe soe many & mighty sinns wthout remorse or acknowledgedm^t that I cannot but thinke these of yours Peccadilloes. Oh that my soule were guiltie of noe higher! . . . I ev^r had an affection for y^u as a kinsman & a Verney, but especially uppon the hopes that we are heires together of salvation, w^{ch} to me is above all obligaçons or relations whatsoever, of w^{ch} though I nev^r doubted . . . yet those letters are more evidence & assurance to me of it . . . Seeinge y^u have given me the freedome of discovery of what I know by y^u, I shall intimate one thinge to y^u as freely now as formerly I have done, even soe longe agoe as when we were Academians, w^{ch} is that y^u have beene ever (even by most of those who thought they

knew y^u best) thought to take pett upon very small occasions agst many, & then very hardly reconcilable, w^{ch} hath beene used as an argum^t to me as inconsistent wth love . . . I must confesse I tremble to have difference wth those who I conceave to be heirs of life wth me, to thinke that we shall have united harts in Heaven & not soe on earth. I know great differences have beene & will be even amongst the best, but I hope God in his Due time will find out a way to unite & reconcile his owne together (though nev^r at a greater distance in the generall in this kingdome then now) as to the publiq cause soe alsoe to y^u & any particulars.' He then names four people with whom he seeks to reconcile Ralph—Aunt Isham, 'Ned ff.' [Fiennes], 'the parson,' and his brother Henry. Of the first three, 'If I understand them aright they are as much y^r frends as I am . . . Harry, though I thinke him unhappy, & not to be compared with them—noe, nor wth him that is nott, yett I thinke he is putt to his shifts to live, w^{ch} makes him doe more unhandsome thinges then otherwaies he would doe, & his choler transport him many times beyond the naturall bias of his heart . . . yet he is y^r Brother still, in whom I thinke you may have comfort, & happily by your conversation (were y^u here) might be wonne to a more righteous course . . . I shall say noe more then remember that short petition, forgive us o^r trespasses as we forgive them that trespass agst us.' Ralph receives his uncles correction with perfect sweetness: 'Dr, you are a right peace-maker, & cannot misse of the reward, for you doe not only endeavour to preserve peace where it is, but to restore it where it is lost . . . I doubt I am too guilty of . . . beeing very hardly reconcilable . . . wherfore I often strive agst it in my praiers, saying, . . . O thou who hast comanded me to overcome evil with good, and to pray for them that despightfully use me; Bee mercifull to myne enemies, O Lord, as to myselfe. Turne thou my hart towards them & theirs towards mee. . . . ' 'for Harry, whose Tongue & Pen, not only on a sudden, but also after long deliberation, hath beene noe lesse bitter then unjust against me (though I am bound to forgive him as I thanke God I doe), yet under

your favour I am noe more obliged to continue an old, or enter into a new strict league & friendship with him then to trust a man that by all the waies & meanes hee can hath endeavoured to deprive me of my life, or (w^{ch} is farre more precious) my good name.' The letter ends with a touching reference to his loss. 'But what! have I writt thus farre of my paper without soe much as mentioning of her that alwaies lived, & lately died in peace, & now is reigning with the prince of peace? Alas, Alas, Deare Dr, tis not that I have forgot (or, indeed, ever can forget), the most irreparable Losse of that incomparable creature, but following your precepts I search & seeke & pray for patience, as for y^e only remedy that Heaven, as well as necessity, hath ordained for your most afflicted friend & servant.'

He was quite determined that at all events nothing so precious to him as his wife's body should remain in France, and he immediately had it embalmed; but there were many difficulties in the way of getting it carried to England, and he dared not send it 'uppon uncertaine termes; least it should bee tossed and tumbled from Place to Place, and being discovered . . . run ye hazard of some affront.' For months it remained in Ralph's house at Blois, and he wrote: 'though it bee locked upp in a Roome by itselfe where noebody comes, yet you must needes thinke it noe small affliction to me to have it soe neare mee. You know when Sarah died Abraham made hast to bury the dead out of his sight.'

Aug. 21,
1650.

June 10,
1650.

'I have been shrewdly put to it in a way you little dreame off, for by y^e Lawes of France the king is the heire to all strangers, & (the wife by custome being intituled to on halfe) a projecting favorite Begged & obtained this Droict d'Aubaine (that is, y^e succession of all my Wife's estate in France, she dying heere without naturalized or French borne issue), . . . but by the Blessing of God uppon a good friend's endeavour, there was a stopp put upon the graunt before the compleat expedition & sealing. (Oh, oh that it had pleased the Almighty that his decree to deprive me of my deare, discreet, & most incomparable Wife, were but as

easily revoakable.) What Further charge this cunning Catchpole may bring uppon me, I cannot yet foresee, but I have taken what care I can to prevent his plots, & privately disposed the best of my goods, & sent my coach & horses about 40 miles off (to a French freind's house) where I shall (even uppon any Termes) endeavour to have them sould. What a losse this is, what an expence this puts me to, what gratifications of freinds will bee expected and must bee performed, you cannot easily imagen. Oh that the God of Gods were pleased to make the unspeakable losse of my most vertuous wife as easily reparable and as little damageable.'

The reality of Ralph's grief for the loss of his wife was shown by his life-long constancy and his undying remembrance of her. Her sweet and noble character was indeed worthy of his great devotion, and the references to her in his letters throughout the succeeding forty-six years are as true as they are touching.

'You may put upp a greate cscutcheon at Claydon,' he writes, 'if you please, before the Corps comes; faile not of anything that is fit for soe unparalleled a creature; her armes are in the Herald's office & will send mine next week if I can finde them. The escutcheon will cost about 40 or 50 shillings . . . doe what you thinke best and fittest without consideration of any charge.' At length a safe-conduct for the coffin was found. Sir Ralph followed the ship in thought with loving anxiety, 'every puffle of winde that tosses it at sea, shakes me at land'—the honest Doctor saw it reverently interred in Middle Claydon Church on November 20, 1650. A few relations and friends were present at Mary's burial, and Sir Roger wrote, 'Although the sadness of the occasion struck death allmost into me, yet as it was a service both to the living and the dead, it was performed with as much life & heartiness as could be imagined.' Sir Ralph was left to derive what comfort he could from the intelligence that Dame Ursula, the last survivor of the four Lady Verneys, was deeply offended that she had not been invited to the funeral; it was her way of showing respect for

one whom the older members of the family held in such high esteem.

In advising his quarrelsome sister Margaret Elmes to be submissive to her husband, Sir Ralph pays a touching tribute to Mary's memory: 'Give me leave to set before your eyes my owne deare wife that's now with God. You know she brought a farr better fortune then my Estate deserved, and for her gifts of Grace and nature I may justly say she was inferior to very few, soe that she might well expect all reasonable observance from mee, yet such was her goodnesse that when I was most Peevish she would be most Patient, and as if she meant to aire my frowardnesse and frequent follies by the constancy of her forbearance, studded nothing more then a sweet compliance. But perhaps you may thinke I was a better husband then your owne; alas, if that were soe, twas she that made me soe, and I may thanke her silence and discreation for your good oppinion of me, for had she (like soe many other wives) divulged my faults, or in a proud disdainfull way dispised me for my pettish humours, tis tenn to one I had beene found more liable to censure then any other man.'

The state of Ralph's affairs did not admit of his returning home, and he wrote to Dr. Denton: 'My mind runs more after Italy; not to delight myselfe with anything there, for since my deare Wife's death I have bid adieu to all that most men count theire Happinesse. The Arabian deserts are now farre more agreeable to my humour then the most pleasant Grotts and Gardens that Rome it selfe affords. Ah Dr., Dr., her company made every place a paradise unto me, but she being gonn, unlesse god bee most meraculously mercifull, what good can bee expected by your most afflicted and unfortunate servant.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

SIR RALPH A WIDOWER.

1650-1651.

MARY was dead. This was the central fact of Ralph Verney's life as he sat in his desolate house at Blois in May 1650. As long as Mary lived, the loss of friends and fortune, the rending asunder of political ties, left his real inner life untouched. Absolutely devoted to him, her common sense, her piety, and not least her playfulness, had made his wife the best of counsellors and the most charming of companions. Ralph had often thought over Mary's future, and had provided for her comfort in the dim far-away years when, in the course of nature, she should become a widow; but it had never occurred to him that he might himself survive her.

'An absolute detestation of all manner of Businesse' and of society fell upon him. 'Ah, Deare Doctor,' he writes, 'the sorrows that possess my soule are my companions in every place, and make the sollitary corners of the world the most agreeable to my humour; for there (when words are wanting) I have liberty to weepe my Fill, and when these Floodgates can noe longer runn, my sighs and groanes bewaile the most unutterable losse, that now afflicts, Your most disconsolate and unfortunate servant.'

Of the seven children born to Sir Ralph and Dame Mary, two only survived her; Edmund, aged 13, had now been absent from England more than six years, and John, aged 9, had been at Blois since his mother brought him back with her from Claydon in 1647. These little boys, with a French manservant and an English maid or two, formed Sir Ralph's household, managed with painful and

scrupulous economy. In the autumn the family party was increased by the arrival of the two little Eure girls, with Luce Sheppard now their waiting-gentlewoman. Better days were dawning, as the sequestration was taken off Sir Ralph's estate: but creditors were clamouring to be paid, and he was honourably anxious to cut down all expenses, except those necessary for the boys' education, till he could satisfy them in full.

It was not money-matters only that Sir Ralph passed in review during his solitary evenings; the more he pondered over the beauty of his wife's character, the more clearly he saw the flaws in his own. He thought over 'the rules he had walked by,' and desired to amend them where they were faulty, and to live up to a higher standard—'God haveing bent his Bow like an Enemy, and made me desolate, by taking away her that was pleasant in mine Eyes, now, now is the Time to breake off my sinns by righteousnessse, and mine iniquities by shewing mercy to the Poore and then . . . hee that settis a marke on the Foreheads of those that sigh, and redeemes the soules of his servants; in his own good way and time will afford mee deliverance.'

Dr. Denton is anxious that Sir Ralph should have some trusty 'English servant or sister or kinsman about him,' who would care for him if he should be sick, and who could 'act the part of a friend as well as of a servant.' Sir Ralph entirely agrees with him, but when he goes over 'the catta-logue' of his relations, he cannot think of one able to be of use to him that can be spared, and he remembers what ill-luck he has had with too many of them; he feels it hopeless that any companionship should take the place of Mary's, and thinks 'tis much better to be alone, and trust God with all.'

In the absence of near relations, Sir Ralph had three special friends at Blois—Mr. William Gee, a distant cousin, Mr. Thomas Cordell, and Monsieur Duval. Mr. Gee came of a north-country family that represented Beverley, Cocker-mouth, or Kingston-on-Hull from the first Parliament of James I. to the last Parliament of William III. Sir Ralph

visited his cousin's home when driving from Claydon to Malton in 1653, and thus writes to him of the empty house and of the changed appearance of the parish church under the Puritan *régime*: 'I have not failed to pay my Homage and respects to Bishopp's Burton, 'twas but a mile out of my way; soe I rose one hour the sooner, and went quite round your Parke and Pallace; and in earnest, though Both doe mourne for want of you, theire Master, yet all lay well without, and cleane enough within. But I confesse had it not beene for the Toombe and Steeple, I should scarce have knowne either the Church nor Chancell, but this disease is Epidemicall, over all our climate, therefore you must not think to have it otherwise there.'

Oct. 18,
1653.

The Cordells were also a parliamentary family. A William Cordell represented Bridport in the time of Richard II.; Edward Cordell had sat for Portsmouth in the reign of Elizabeth; and another member of the family, Robert Cordell, was to be Sir Ralph's colleague in the Parliaments after the Restoration. Mr. Thomas Cordell was a bachelor of straitened means, kind-hearted and intellectual, with a hasty temper. He had often borrowed money of Sir Ralph in sudden emergencies, but their friendship had stood the strain. He gave Mun Verney regular lessons in Latin when they all travelled together, and he would do 'Mathematicalls' for diversion with Mr. Gee. He had generally one or two young Englishmen with him, Royalists, whose parents would not send them to Oxford or Cambridge under the existing conditions, and he was popular with his pupils.

Monsieur Duval was an elderly Frenchman, whose real name, Sir Ralph tells us, was Duport. He had business relations with Englishmen, and was often useful to the exiles when he visited London. Sir Ralph had a great regard for him, and valued his intimate acquaintance with French history and literature, which his own increased familiarity with the language now permitted him to study and enjoy. After Monsieur Duval's death in the winter of 1653, Mr. Cordell told Sir Ralph that, speaking about Duval

to a Monsieur Monfort, he mentioned that his wife 'was wont to goe and com betweene London and Paris. Uppon this Monfort inferred that then certainly hee had two wives; telling mee that Monsieur Du Val was borne about Vendosme, and formerly was by profession an advocate, and that unfortunately about 30 yeares agoe, hee killed a man in France, since which time (beeing constrayned to fly) he had never lived with his wife, but that 3 yeares agoe, hee saw his wife at Tours, and dined with her, who reproached him very severely of unkindnesse towards her. I am very sorry that I unwarily should discover this secrett.'

Sir Ralph refused to lend any credence at all to the story, though Mr. Cordell, while commending his charity, thought 'the presumptions very urgent on the other side. . . . Monsieur Monfort seems to be a man of very good fashion. . . . But let it bee as it will bee in God's name.' Whatever sad secrets may have been hidden in Monsieur Duval's past, the four men met in very good fellowship, and Duval's letters occur constantly in the correspondence of the next four years. Sir Ralph had a horror of smoking, but the friends played at chess and discussed the latest news from England over a glass of the old canary sack that Mary had brought from the Claydon cellars. Sir Roger Burgoyne's weekly letter to Sir Ralph provided the best political and social gossip for these evening discussions; whether he announced a great victory of 'our General' [Cromwell] over the Scots, or that 'the statues of King James and King Charles were pull'd downe from Pauls the last week, and that of King Charles from the Exchange,' nothing was too serious or too trivial for Sir Roger's industrious pen.

Dr. Denton sent out a curious account of two books that had been published in the previous year (1649), called 'New Lights shining in Bucks.' 'The Doctrine is briefly this, that Kings are of the Beast and the Divell, that there ought to be communitie and levellinge, and declares that all men beinge alike priviledged by birth, they were to enjoy the creatures alike, without propriety one more then another; and noe man to Lord or command over his owne kind, nor

to enclose the creatures to his owne use, and that the Levellers' principles are most just and honest.'

Sir Ralph's genial friend, Sir Henry Newton, after his last visit to Blois, had gone off to Holland to look after 'a certaine Cosen of mine, Mrs. Jane Puckering, that was stolen away out of Grenwich parke last Michelmas, by the Walshes of Worcestershire, who forcing her upon landing to say something for their advantage, sue her upon a marriage, and have made a shift to gett her into a Monastery at Newport [Nieuport] where shce is a perfect prisoner, and in great distresse.'

Sir Henry's mother was Catherine, sister of Sir Thomas Puckering (or Pickering), Bart., M.P. for Tamworth in the parliaments of 1620 to 1627. The 'stealing away' of Sir Thomas Puckering's daughter and heiress in October 1649, while walking with her maids close to her own home, was one of the *causes célèbres* of the day.

To run off with an heiress and force her into a marriage had been no uncommon feat for the wilder spirits amongst the young Cavaliers; but the Commonwealth, with its anxious provisions for public morality, afforded to women a protection they had never known before. Prompt measures were taken by the Council of State; the difficulties made in Holland about surrendering Mistress Jane were met by a still more peremptory demand. Soon after Sir Henry's visit an English man-of-war was sent over to bring her home, and an indictment of felony was found against Joseph Walsh and his companions. Sir Henry inherited her fortune at her death, and took the name of Puckering-Newton.¹

On his way to visit his cousin he writes to Sir Ralph in his airy way of a duel he had fought with Colonel Bamfield, who had behaved very badly to his wife's sister Anne Murray. 'I mett at sea with a rencontre of a person who bored some few holes in mee at landing, which have done mee this only despiht, that they kept me away so much longer then I

¹ He often signed himself Henry Puckering before this accession of fortune. Perhaps it was already his Christian name.

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Sir Ralph's genial friend, Sir Henry Newton, after his last visit to Blois, had gone off to Holland to look after 'a certaine Cosen of mine, Mrs. Jane Puckering, that was stolen away out of Greenwich parke last Michelmas, by the Walshes of Worcestershire, who forcing her upon landing to say something for their advantage, sue her upon a marriage, and have made a shift to gett her into a Monastery at Newport [Nieuport] where shee is a perfect prisoner, and in great distresse.'

Sir Henry's mother was Catherine, sister of Sir Thomas Puckering (or Pickering), Bart., M.P. for Tamworth in the parliaments of 1620 to 1627. The 'stealing away' of Sir Thomas Puckering's daughter and heiress in October 1649, while walking with her maids close to her own home, was one of the *causes célèbres* of the day.

To run off with an heiress and force her into a marriage had been no uncommon feat for the wilder spirits amongst the young Cavaliers; but the Commonwealth, with its anxious provisions for public morality, afforded to women a protection they had never known before. Prompt measures were taken by the Council of State; the difficulties made in Holland about surrendering Mistress Jane were met by a still more peremptory demand. Soon after Sir Henry's visit an English man-of-war was sent over to bring her home, and an indictment of felony was found against Joseph Walsh and his companions. Sir Henry inherited her fortune at her death, and took the name of Puckering-Newton.¹

On his way to visit his cousin he writes to Sir Ralph in his airy way of a duel he had fought with Colonel Bamfield, who had behaved very badly to his wife's sister Anne Murray. 'I mett at sea with a rencontre of a person who bored some few holes in mee at landing, which have done mee this only despiht, that they kept me away so much longer then I

¹ He often signed himself Henry Puckering before this accession of fortune. Perhaps it was already his Christian name.

intended from my Cosen, and you; of two pricks scarcely worth the naming, one of them hath been kind to mee about the belly, but the other now seven weekes in cure I doubt will domineere among the sinewes a moneth longer before I gett my arme at liberty.' This letter was written in ignorance of Dame Mary Verney's death. Sir Henry, who with all his jests and oddities had a warm heart, was shocked to hear of his friend's bereavement.

Sept. 5,
1650.

He writes to Sir Ralph from Rouen: 'The sound of your sadnesse first struck my eares at Flushing, but heere it strikes my heart to know the truth of it. I was at first unwilling to beleeeve so unexpected a misfortune, But now I must not only bee content amongst crosses of all sorts God hath pleas'd to send us, to beare also this unesteemable losse of so noble a friend, But as a friend and hearty sufferer with you must begg of you to beare it patiently, And though the tendernesse of our affections will for some time give way unto our passions, yett upon better consideration our reason must submitt unto God's will, in whose only power¹ it is, to give you comfort at present, or further punishment hereafter in the like sort. . . . This late hath made some changes also in my intentions, butt must make much greater in yours; I did intende my wife for Blois so soone as shee should bee brought to bedd (w^{ch} I expect howrely). But that place now will bee too malencholly for either you or her. . . . I am oblig'd by businesse to stay some dayes in this sick towne, or else, although the wayes are everywhere unsafe for travell, And my owne late indisposition makes mee not altogether so fitt for it, I should have come myselfe in the place of this letter.' The plague was raging at Rouen, whence Sir Henry wrote: 'On Tuesday last died 83 persons.'

Sept. 11,
1650.

Sir Ralph replies: 'I confesse till now I never knew what sorrow was, this, oh this, farre exceedes all my other misfortunes, and hath put me uppon soe many severall resolutions that now I know not what to resolve uppon.

¹ 'Of whose only gift it cometh.' Collect for 13th Sunday after Trinity.

God direct me for the best, my desire is to satisfie my creditors in England and some other occations will tye me, and consequently my children heere this winter. Italy is very much in my thoughts, and I could wish it were not out of yours. . . . Had I not sould my Horses, my coach should come to Rouen to fetch both you and your Family.'

Sir Henry felt that the best service he could render his friend was to go to him at once 'rather than any move to rubb over his sore, at so great distance.' 'If our severall occasions could allow us both to live in the same place, Beleeve it, S^r, sans compliment It is the height of my Ambition, and so you shall beleeve when I shall bee so happie as to show you the bosome of S^r, your faithfull friend and humble servant, etc.'

Sept. 20,
1650.

Sir Ralph, though he has 'a passionate desire' to see so good a friend, declares that he must not think of travelling so far to stay 'for such a spurt'; but Sir Henry was not to be put off. A month later Sir Ralph acknowledges gratefully the comfort he had derived from his society; he and Mr. Gee had ridden a stage with Sir Henry on his journey back to Paris, and he writes to him from Blois on his return to 'expresse some part of my Thankfulness for all your favours, and cheifly for your good company at this time of my Distresse; certainly if Mortall man could meritt anything of Heaven, this moneth's Pennance, and your patient enduring of it, would purchasse you a most glorious Place There. . . . that neglecting your owne contentment you rather choose to suffer heere with him, that now you are gon, must againe resume the title of Your most unfortunate, and afflicted servant, Verney.'

Oct 30,
1650

Sir Henry's reply is characteristic: 'Sir, though I am out of humour, you ought to bee quite otherwise, for you are ridd of the most troublesome fellow that ever came into your quarters. Therefore bee merry if yew love mee, or if yew love your selfe, and those that love yew. . . . Forgive mee all my faults and troubles to you and the rest of my noble convoy, and conjure them from mee to doe so too, or else If sack and Sugar bee a sin Lord help the wicked that

Oct. 1650

pursued with such violence your Kindnesse to undoe—Deare Sir your most affectionate oblig'd humble servant.'

Nov. 12,
1650.

It is refreshing to find that Sir Henry knows his Falstaff, as Shakespeare is so little in fashion that he is seldom quoted in the letters except by Dr. Denton. Sir Henry next writes from Paris concerning an old coat which Sir Ralph has asked him to sell for him: it is difficult to get a good price for it, and no wonder as 'the moths have been very busie with it'! 'Our English Louvre Lords are gone to Fontainebleau, I doe not know their errand . . . there was whispering (and some say crying) at the Louvre for the King's leaving their partie in Scotland, and going God knowes whither, but God knowes too how true it is, though I heard it amongst our greatest intelligencers. . . . I languish for a mate at chesse, more than a woman [Lady Newton has evidently arrived], therefore cannot but reflect upon the pleasures I had with you. . . . My Lord Jermin is going to the Hague [the Prince of Orange having died of small-pox], to condole and congratulate, which are such contrarieties that you and I (I doubt) are not courtiers enough to undertake.'

Dec. 10,
1650.

Sir Henry refers to Sir Ralph's 'morall counsell and divine w^{ch} you know, proceeding from you, I observe as religiously as any Canons of the Church. . . . My service to all the Noble Squiers of the Strong fire side fromage table; where give mee leave (at least) to envie you amidst your storys, your divinitie and Mathematicks, drinking my health, and judging, not the twelve tribes of Israel (like my lord Goring) but mee, for neither fish nor flesh nor good redd hering.' We come upon one of the French chess-players again, Mousieur Poppein (or Pappin), many years later in a letter from Sir Ralph at Claydon promising 'to attend the Earl of Salisbury about your businesse, . . . 'tis a sad thing that any Englishman should give you soe much trouble, considering your affection and readinesse to serve the nation.'

March
1650.

Sir Ralph receives some more friends at Blois during that autumn: 'Charles Needham my very good acquaintance

and a fine youth' and Sir Philip Mountaine are there; Mr. Ayloff, my Lord Downe, and my Lord Falkland with his 'roring Boyes,' a youth whose tastes were in striking contrast to all that Sir Ralph remembered of his father. Dr. Denton refers to another noisy English party at Blois, 'I am sorry for my Lord, for doubtless she is Styx, Acheron, Phlegeton, Cerberus una sibi, and I am sorry for his daughter, for certainly many piggs are better kept and bred.' Giles, Lord Alington, 'that knight of the sun,' and Mr. Harrison 'his governour,' Mr. Hussey, and 'Count Hide' are also mentioned as staying there. Oct 3,
1650.

Sir Ralph receives a cheerful letter from the Hon. Hatton Rich, stepson of his old friend, Lady Warwick, from the lodgings which he and Mary formerly occupied at Tours: 'Your friend Antoinette, and all the rest heere, kisse your hands, but if they should know that you will not allow them to be belles, I beleive it would breede ill blood betwixt you. I have formerly comended the Hay for good people, but indeed, these are soe far before them, as ther's noe comparison and for the good old man heere, he doth soe confound me wth Civillities, both by words and actions, that if he was an old woman, I thinke verily I should marry him. . . . I must be fain to borrow mony of him, least he should take it ill of mee (but pray let not my Lord Willoughby know that, least he should againe dun mee), for Rolic apart, they are the best people in the world.'

On Christmas Day a party of thirty English exiles met at dinner, and Sir Henry Newton writes from Rouen that he would gladly have made their number thirty-one. He still retains an affectionate remembrance of the noble company at Blois, 'who if they were to be purchased with gold, I would not grudge to give my bookes, or the wayle of them for Mr. Gee, for Mr. Cordell and Mr. du Val, but chiefly for Sir Ralph I would give myselfe.' As he could not keep his Christmas among friends and Cavaliers, Sir Henry proposes to himself, as an action of charity suited to the day, to try to forgive the Presbyterians; but he feels this to be almost an impossible task, and cheers himself

with the assurance 'that God Almighty will not.' When he thinks of Sir Ralph and 'that good Mr. Cordell,' he feels that 'Blois must thrive for Obed-Edom's house.' Better days were coming for this cheerful philosopher; he lived to see the Presbyterians driven out, and to enjoy a good fat sinecure himself, when the King came to his own again.

Amongst the English exiles to whom Sir Ralph showed kindness were several old friends, distressed clergymen of the Church of England—Dr. Morley; Dr. Cosin, Dean of Peterborough ('since L^d Bishop of Durham'), and Dr. Creighton, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells. Sir Ralph wrote to Dr. Cosin at Paris apologising for sending him 'a little Box with 40 Livres in it,' a sum he and Mary could ill spare, however small it appeared compared with the merits and necessities of one 'that had formerly enjoyed and soe well deserved a great part of our Churches Patrimony.' Dr. Cosin thanked him for the gift and the privacy with which it was conveyed to him. 'Whatever my want be, you have made yo^r oblation at an Altar, where I shall never want an Eucharist for you, w^{ch} being all y^e Retribution y^t I am able to make you, you wil be pleased to accept from him, whose most hearty pray'rs are daily offered up unto God for you.'

May 5,
1650.

May 17,
1650.

Dean Cosin was a constant preacher at Sir Richard Browne's chapel at Paris, that great meeting-place of the Church of England refugees, and was therefore well known to them all. Evelyn, who saw him in 1663, as the rich and powerful Prince Bishop of Durham, complains that 'he little remember'd in his greatnesse those that had been kind and assisted him in his exile.' But in 1650, and for many years after, he was in sad distress. Lord Hatton writes of him in 1654: 'Mr. Deane Cosins is exceeding ill . . . wee shall be sencible of his loss when he is gone. He is exceeding poore . . . even to the want of necessityes for his health and hath not anything heere coming in, for officiating at the Residents weckely, and with the Duke of Gloucester dayly.'

Dr. Cosin had been ordered by Charles I. to draw up a book of private devotions for the Protestant ladies of the Court, reproached by the Queen's French ladies with having

no breviaries. His little book, called by the Puritans 'Cosin's cosining Devotions,' as having a Romish flavour, he hastened to send to Sir Ralph when he heard of his bereavement, and the gift was highly appreciated.

There is also a pleasant correspondence with Sir Richard Browne, 'H.M. Resident,' and Elizabeth his wife. Sir Ralph sent them some fruit—'a Box of Blois grapes, and a Box of Sour Prunes, St. Catherine's; . . . a trifle, but the best I can now get'—and presented Sir Richard Hastings to them. They thank him for 'his noble token.'

When Luce Sheppard and her little charges passed through Paris, Lady Browne was kind to them; and charged Luce to find at Blois, perhaps at the great annual fair, some fur which she could not buy in Paris. Luce failed to do so, but Sir Ralph, glad to show Lady Browne any mark of respect, came to the rescue. 'Madame,' he writes, 'Finding by Luce, you had occasion for some Fur, Nov. 24,
1650. and that she could not fit you in this Towne, I haveing such a one, as I guessed might possibly serve your turne (though I could not then come at it) have adventured to send it now, together with some other odd Trifles w^{ch} I must beeseech you to accept, though I confesse they are not worth receiving. Madame, had I not a very greate experience of your goodness, I should not have presumed to tender such considerable Toyes as these, to a person of your Meritt.'

Sir Ralph keeps a note that 'with this letter I sent her:

A greate White Furr to cover a Bedd.

2 Paires of Frenchpain Gloves.

12 Paires of Eng: White Gloves.

12 yds of Eng: Scarlet Ribbon, 6 penny Broad, and

12 yds of 2 penny Broad to it.

A paire of Scarlet silk stockings, with a paire of Turkey Garters to them.

An excellent Spanish pocket cover with Scarlet Taffaty, and a Box of Dried Grapes with 4 laires 3 p. besides the Box.'

A gentleman might now hesitate to send to the wife of the English Ambassador at Paris 'a paire of scarlet silk

stockings, with a paire of Turkey Garters to them'; but in such evil days Lady Browne took these additions to her wardrobe in very good part, lamented the 'small capacity' she and her husband now had to serve Sir Ralph, and signed herself 'untill some happy opportunity of Requittal, in all gratefullnesse' his most obliged humble servant; her son and daughter are also Sir Ralph's humble servants. This daughter was the wife of John Evelyn; during his absence, to settle his affairs in England, she remained for a time at Paris, 'yet very young, under the care of an excellent lady and prudent mother.' Lady Browne did not long enjoy her 'greate white furr': she went to England the next summer for her daughter's confinement, and soon after caught scarlet fever and died—'an excellent and virtuous lady,' says her son-in-law, 'having been so obliging on all occasions, to those who continually frequented her house in Paris, which was not only an hospital, but an asylum to all our persecuted and afflicted countrymen, during eleven years' residence there in that honourable situation.'

Sir Ralph was fond of pictures, as befitted a man who had known Cornelius Jansen and Vandyke, and was held to be somewhat of a connoisseur.

Susan Alport, his eldest sister, was ambitious to collect as many family pictures as possible in her own room at Overton Manor. She is to have 'Doctor's goode face' and wants Ralph's portrait and Mary's to be done 'both of a bigness.'

A commission that gave Sir Ralph much more trouble was one from Margaret, formerly Mrs. Cary, now the wife of Sir Edward Herbert. As with Lady Browne, Sir Ralph's civilities first take the form of a box of Blois grapes and 'a Box of Plumbes, St. Katherin, from Tours.' Lady Herbert was living in Paris, where Jean Petitot's fame as a miniature painter on enamel had made these exquisite little portraits the fashion of the day. The Genevan goldsmith won his reputation in England, in the palmy days of Charles I.'s patronage of art. Lodged at Whitehall under the charge of Sir Edmund Verney as Knight-Marshal, Petitot had gained

fresh colours from Mayerne's knowledge of chemistry, and Vandyke himself had superintended his work. He accompanied the exiled English Court to Paris, where Louis XIV. lodged him in the Louvre, and the most distinguished people in Europe came to him to be painted. Evelyn mentions one of his enamels as amongst 'his Majestie's rarities' at Windsor. Dame Margaret Herbert, who brought to the patronage of art the frugal mind of a British matron, required Sir Ralph to find for her in the provinces as good a painter as Petitot at half his price. Sir Ralph felt the task to be an impossible one, though Blois had kept its fame for goldsmiths' work, and some faint afterglow of its Renaissance glory; he had too true an appreciation of Petitot's genius.

Dame Margaret writes: 'If my picture of Vandike be April 29,
1650. with you, I pray speak with the man that did S^r Richard Hastingses watche, to see at what rate he will make one in amell. I would have all the Picture, and desier to have it exactly donne, for it is for a person that is very curious.' Sir Ralph replies that the artist 'will doe his best endeavour to please, the gold will come to at least 15 livres, and (being it must May 5,
1650. be so well donn, and must have all the Pickture in it) hee will have seaven pistolls [a pistol was worth about 16s.] mecrely for his paynes, he saies hee had 5 of S^r R: Hastings, besides the gold, and that was but ye middle, but in this must bee both your hands, a Dogg, a chaire, and Trees which is much more worke, but some little part of the 4 corners (and the Body of the dog is at one of them) must needes bee left out, because the origenall is square, and I presume you intend his coppy shall bee ovall. . . . Be pleased to send me the size in paper, and what kinde of loope you would have made at y^e Topp to fasten it by, and whether there shall bee any thinge at the Bottome to hang gums on, and what other directions you thinke fit.'

Mary Verney's death at Blois, and Lady Herbert's confinement at Paris, interrupted the correspondence, but she now resumed it. 'Sir, If you can boro so much time July 22,
1650. of your sad thoughts you will doe me a favour to gett my

picture made in amell.' Sir Ralph's letter had not shaken Dame Margaret's orthography, which, like her taste in art, was all her own. 'For the sise I leave to the workman's discretion, only I desier bothe the hands may be donne. I would have no ring at the bottom only one at the top to hang it by; and on the back side flowers or anything he can doe best. I hope hee will doe it as well as Pettito, which I should be very glad of, for he has used me very ill.'

Sir Ralph believes that 'whosoever drawes yours heere you must expect to have it as farre short of Pettito's Worke, as Johnsons [Jansen's] was of Vandike's. I am very sorry that Pettito hath used you ill, for I meant to intreate your care of one or two that (if hee bee not too deere) I intended hee should draw for mee. I am sure you can tell his Lowest price, and how long hee is usually about one of the ordinary size that he copies after Vandike.'

Aug 18,
1650.

Lady Herbert replies: 'I shall desier the picture may be donne by him that works best thear, Pettito dos none under 15 pistoels. I imployed him to do the Prinses Sopias picture, and after 6 monthes expectation he brought it me so ill donne, that I did not take it, the truthe was it was donne by his companion who dos now most of his work [his brother-in-law Bordier], and if you will have any thing from him I cannot promise you better dealing, for I thought I deserved more respect from him. When he fail'd me, I gott the picture copied in liming by one that did it rarely, the same man has donne some things in amell. I am very confident he will out doe Pettito. I tould him you desired to have some donne and he is content to undertake it, if it be a picture of Vandike's he must doe it after, els he will not trouble himself with it.'

Sept. 18,
1650.

Sir Ralph finds the Blois artist as dear as Petitot, and all work is suspended during the grape gathering. But 'if my dilligence could contribute any thing to its perfection, night and day the Painter should bee Haunted by, Madam, Your most faithfull though most unfortunate servant.' The painter must have had a lively time of it, with Sir Ralph's visits and Dame Margaret's suggestions and

economies. 'Sir,' she writes on receiving the sketch for Nov. 4,
 her miniature, 'I thinke that whear the head is biggest, will ^{1650.}
 be best if he can make any thing come over that arme that
 wants the hand, a pees of the scarf as I have marked it
 with the pen, or els to make the head of the dog come up
 in that holow between the arm and the body, but beeing he
 leaves out so much of the picture, me thinks he should bate
 something off his prise, which as I remember was 7 pistolls,
 that which is making hear is finish't all but some little
 touches, and is in my opinion far beyond any thing ever
 Petitto did. I am told Petitto dos none now under 20
 pistolls of the biggest sise I sent you.' Whether the lady,
 the dog, the chair, and the trees were all got into the little
 enamel, we do not hear; but it is not surprising that
 Petitot found it hard to satisfy her ladyship's 'curiosity.'
 The Blois artist accomplished only a partial success. The
 gold sank in the middle. The colours of the 'origenall' Dec. 1st,
 are grown yellow, but I think he hath made the Flesh of ^{1650.}
 this to Gray, Good Madame, let me heare how you like it
 in all points, and let not this man's ill fortune, or want of
 skill, make you beleeve I did not conjure him to doe his
 utmost.'

This is not the only bargaining we hear of with an
 artist; there was a Dutch painter in London who was
 cheaper still. 'Cary is very desirous of your picture,' Dec. 6,
 writes Brother Stewkeley to Sir Ralph, 'but is troubled to ^{1653.}
 heare that sitting is a posture you like not, hee that
 drew plans, lives in the new street by Cursitor ally a Dutch
 man, his name is Ruse, my brother paid him 3*l.*, as I take it
 for frame and case and all.'

Sir Ralph's letters from England were sad enough;
 public affairs were very unsettled, and each member of the
 family had his or her own troubles: 'Elmes hath Tom in
 prison uppon 2 suites. . . . Betty wants cloathes and there
 is a small crosse caper about her going to Pegg; Dr made
 Pegg cry about it and will beo at her againe, Harry also
 told her her owne, as Dr heares.' Penelope has lost a baby,
 Sir Ralph's godchild, who only lived long enough, as the

poor mother put it, 'to be maid a Christian sole.' Mary needed an 'adlison' to her allowance, 'for the times grow harde,' and Henry is so unpleasant that Sir Ralph will rather 'disprise the Deedes of such a desperate Dick then suffer himselfe to be dared out of anything.'

Nov. 14.
1650.

Dr. Denton writes of the death of an old friend: 'Y^r letter came to me at Giddy Hall . . . in a sad home Sir Charles beinge newly dead, he died very willingly and excellently well to the great admiration of all, and God's strength appeared in his weakness wonderfully, for for many houres together he was in a most heavenly extasie. And he died as much and more a Courtier then ever I sawe, paying great civilities most heavenly by way of praier and benediction to wife, children, kindred, servants and friends. It is a sad story to tell y^a how ill his children and debts are left, both he and his wife and divers others thought the younger children had beene particularly provided for by 400^l per Ann. and for ought I see by any deeds that yett appeare they had only a power to provide for them but it not beinge executed they have not one groat left them. Sr Charles his sickness was a spotted fever; . . . he is to be buried in Suffolke, and I find my lady will, as you, beare all the charges of coaches, horses and men.' Sir Henry Newton wrote to Sir Ralph in December: 'I am heavily sensible of poor Charles Gaudy's death, though comforted among his friends, that as hee lived so honest a Cavalier, hee died so good a Christian.'

Sir Ralph was planning a journey to Italy: he would allow himself three months to wind up his affairs, then give his address to none but the Doctor and Sir Roger, with power to the Doctor to burn his letters. The tangle of debts between himself and young Edmund Denton is so complicated that he is in despair: 'if all that I can write shall bee called a labarinth and scrupulous, and looked uppon as mecrely dillatory, I can say noe lesse then that *None are soe blinde as those that will not see.*'

Hopeless of fulfilling his many obligations, Sir Ralph had considered, soon after he became a widower, whether he ought not to sell Claydon. He is not very hopeful that even

this desperate step would clear him, for the market is so glutted with the sale of 'Church lands, Crowne lands, and Malignants' Estates' that purchasers are shy, and Claydon would sell cheap. 'But if there is no other remedy,' he writes, 'I had rather sell it all, then a part of it, and if it must goe, the sooner tis gonn the more money will bee left. And if I must bee soe unhappy, I wish I knew it now, for if I sell this land I shall forever bid adieu to England, and then I would not burry my deare wife there, for whensoever it pleaseth God to call me to him, I much desire, and (as shee did) shall make it my request, to have my Bones burried by hers (and if I tooke care for that, she bid mee lay her where I pleased), soe that when our soules and bodies shall be reunited, wee may goe hand in hand to Heaven togeather. And tho' that in the resurrection none marry nor are given in Marriage, yet I hope (without being censured for curiosity) I may piously beleeve, that Wee who ever from our very childhoods lived in soe much peace, and christian concord heere on Earth, shall alsoe in our Elder yeares for the full compleating of our Joyes, at least be knowne to one another in Heaven. And I assure you Dr as the confidence of this is one of the greatest comforts I now enjoy, soe the contemplation thereof (even when I am almost swallowed up of Loud sorrow) yeelds some measure of contentment to your most afflicted freinde.'

CHAPTER XXX.

SIR RALPH ON HIS TRAVELS.

1651-1653.

THE three months Sir Ralph had given himself to wind up his money matters extended to six, and yet the business seemed but little advanced ; however, in March 1651, he is making his last preparations at Blois for a prolonged tour.

His continued absence from England was a great grief to the two faithful friends, Dr. Denton and Sir Roger Burgoyne, who had shown him a love scarcely less devoted and tender than that of Mary herself. They had hoped that when the sad business devolving upon him after her death was finished, he would turn his thoughts homewards. But Sir Ralph still felt that he might be imperilling his personal liberty by returning, and in the unsettled state of politics in England he could not see his way to taking any share in public life. With his attachment to the Church of England and his horror of government by the sword, he was out of sympathy with Cromwell ; and after stoutly resisting Charles I., he was still less likely to be attracted by the coterie of intriguing Royalists with their squabbles and jealousies at the Hague or in Paris—‘the Louvre Lords,’ as Sir Henry Newton contemptuously calls them. Added to this he shrank from taking up his home life again without his wife’s help. He had only visited Claydon in a hurried and uncomfortable way, since it had passed into his possession on the fatal day of Edgehill.

Sir Roger, who was ‘most longingly expecting’ the happiness of a meeting, is in despair to hear of further wanderings : ‘You are now going to see the pope, I am

confident that the next will be the turke.' Dr. Denton writes: 'I rec'd yours of 1st March 1651¹ which brought me the cold and comfortlesse newes of your beginnunge your travells, but when I consider God's presence is every where guidinge and protectinge, and that he is a God both of the Hills and of the valleys, and that even in the wildernes (whither he leads his owne) his great wonders he manifested to his first borne people there, It is a great inducement to me to encourage my selfe in my Lord and my God, and to beleeve that he will be with you in all the ways wherin you goe, and amonge all the people through whom you passe. I pray date your letters from the place you write that I may know which way you steere your course.'

March 24,
1651.

In January 1651 Sir Ralph went for a short time to Rouen and Paris, leaving Mun and Jack with Luce Sheppard and the little girls. 'Since your departure from hence,' writes Mr. Cordell, 'I have been like the weather all sad and cloudie, and scarce able to speak in jest or good earnest.' Mun is clamorous in his lamentations; nothing went well, he declared, when his father was away: Prenost, who teaches him to draw, quite neglects his duty; he has never worked at Sir Ralph's portrait since he left, he arrives late to give Mun his lesson, and never stays his hour. He acknowledges his obligations to Mr. Cordell; a year would not suffice to thank him for all the kindness he had shown him. He desires to send 'mes baise-mains' to Sir Henry Newton, who was a favourite with the children and often inquired of Sir Ralph, 'How doe my two great friends, your two little young men?'

Feb. 5,
1651.

'Monsieur et mon très honoré père, Plust à Dieu qu'il vous donnast la pensée de retourner à Blois, les jours me semblent des années tant il m'ennuye d'estre icy comme dans un desert de solitude; car quoy est cequi me peut desormais plaire dans cette ville, comment est coque cette lumière de la vie, et cette respiration de l'air me peuvent elle estre agreables, puisqu'y ayant perdu cequi m'estoit le plus au Monde, et qu'il m'interesse plus qu'une seule personne dont je suis privé de l'honneur de sa presence, au reste graces à Dieu nous nous porte fort bien, et pourcequi est de moy je

Feb. 5,
1651.

vous assure que je ne manqueray jamais à mon devoir c'espourquoy finissant je demeure et demureray aternellement. Vostre très humble et fidel fils Edmond Verney.'

Sir Ralph was doubting whether to take his eldest boy to Italy; he could not afford a tutor as well as a travelling servant, and 'a French Preceptor is fitter than an English and more useful; 'tis better be without than take an ill one.' He thinks 'Mun is too young to profit by his travel, and his Body too thin to endure it'; but his piteous appeals seem to have turned the scale. A few years later, when there was any question of his spending an hour with Mary Eure, Sir Ralph could not hope for his son's society; but this heroine of a romantic chapter of Mun's youth was still in pinafores; he had all a schoolboy's contempt for girls, and vehemently objected to be left with Luce Sheppard and the little ones, when he had been used to the society of his father and his father's friends.

So it was decided that 'the young gallant,' as Sir Roger called him, should go on the grand tour. Sir Ralph gave up his house, settled Luce and her two little gentlewomen in 'Chambres garnies' at Madame Juselier's, and sent 'poore Jack' to Madame Testard, widow of the Protestant *pasteur*, where he was to board and attend classes under Luce's superintendence. Sir Ralph took his pleasures sadly, and he prayed the Doctor, if any accident should befall him, to extend all love and care to his children 'for their mother's sake who is now a Saint in Heaven. If I could possibly moete with some good friend, whose designe (like mine) were to seeke his Fortune in a Foreign Land, it might bee a comfort and advantage to us both, but considering how unfortunate I have lately beene, in the losse of my most deare, most incomparable companion, how can I thinke to meete with any man soe miserable as my selfe.' Cousin Gee eventually went with him and fulfilled the required conditions very fairly; a widower, like Sir Ralph, he is described as given over to 'melancholy thoughts,' and 'in Love with Carthusian silence.' Mr. Gee had evidently been popular with Sir Henry Newton, because he had been content, when they

met at Blois, to leave to that talkative gentleman the burden of the conversation. When Sir Ralph speaks of himself as old and worn out with sorrows, we need to be reminded that he was at this time only thirty-seven. It does not sound as if the society in the coach would be very lively for Mun, but at fourteen it is a great consolation to be treated as a grown-up person.

They were joined later on by 'Mr. Cordell and his company,' a party of young Englishmen to whom he was acting as tutor; 'Mr. Bartie and his brother, Mr. Richard,' are mentioned. M. Duval rejoices to hear that Sir Ralph is to have Mr. Cordell's company, '*la conversation duquel adoucira en quelque sorte les Incommodités de votre Voyage.*'

No definite plans were made, but letters from England were to be addressed first: 'For Mr. Raphe Smith, à Monsieur Monsieur Remy, chez Monsieur Le Sueur Sculpteur de Roy, aux Maraiz du Temple, Rue de Bretagne, au Soleil levant, à Paris'; and afterwards. 'Chez Monsieur Le Sueur, Rue des graveliers vis à vis de la petite Hotte'; then to await his arrival 'chez Mons^r Mons^r Cesar Gras, Marchand Bourgeois, proche le plastre à Lyon.' 'Mr. Clape's men,' Henry Foukes and Francis Lloyd, 'are to send him the Diurnalls weekly.'

Sir Roger Burgoyne writes to Sir Ralph: 'I shall desire thee to make all the hast thou canst back againe, as may stand with the gravity of the father and the youth of the sonne, I trust that betweene you both you will trace it very orderly.' 'Orderly,' Sir Ralph was sure to be, and there is a careful list of the clothes that Luce Sheppard is to send after them to Lyons, including—'6 Fine night capps Laced marked V in black silke, and 2 Fine night capps plaine,' to frame his care-worn cheeks when the majestic wig was taken off at night; and '4 new plaine capps, marked V in Blew silke,' to surround Mun's fresh, boyish face, such as we see it yet in a picture painted the following year; many elaborate shirts with lace and 'New Cambrick double Ruffe Cuffes, marked V in blew thread,' which must have been a great anxiety to pack; '5 paires of litle Holland Cuffes for Mun,

May 21,
1651.

3 Paires of Cambrick double Boot-hose'; a large number of 'fine Holland Handkerchers Buttoned' which would be puzzling to the modern nose; '2 Tufted Holland Wastcoates Lined'; '2 Dimothy Wastcoates,' one 'Greate Fustian Dressing Wastcoate'; '4 Face Napkins'; and in case of accidents, '2 old Handkerchers and 2 paires of old Linnen Stockings.' Later a 'Black trunk with 3 lockes and Wooden Barres' is packed at Lyons, to go on to Florence, and Sir Ralph keeps a careful list of its contents. There was a great deal of the heavy mourning which the etiquette of grief required: 'Black cloath Doublets,' new and old; 'Black Breeches and Cloake, Blacke Cloath Cape for a Cloake, and 2 other peeces of Blacke Cloath; Black Hats and Hat-bands; old Blacke Tafaty garters, and new Black ribbon roses; and severall peeces' of extra crape.

Even the shades of night and the privacy of the bed-chamber did not allow of any relaxation of woe; Sir Ralph could hardly take his black bed about with him, but he did take '2 Black Taffaty night-cloathes, with the Black night capps, and Black comb and brush and two Black sweetbaggs to it, and the Slippers of Black Velvet,' and 'Blake Paper.' There were more coverings for the head than ever: '6 serge undercapps and 6 Browne callico under-capps,' to be worn by day when the wig was taken off; and besides '3 plaine new night capps coarse,' and '30 Fine Peaked night capps,' there are '2 Night Periwiggs.' The complexion is also cared for; his toilet equipment includes 'Muske for powder, ciprus Powder, and a Puffe, 12 Tortus shell Agendas, 2 gold pick-tooths, Hair Powder, 2 Paires new Barbing Larmes, sizars, and 3 Head-rubbers.'

Sir Ralph was virtuously anxious to provide for repairs, as he took a 'Black Leather needle-case with a greate gold Bodkin, Papers of Pinns, Blew Thread, Shirt Buttons and old White Round Buttons, Cap-strings, and Tape'; but none of the honourable company seemed capable of making use of them, and after some months' absence from Luce's needles and threads, there are lamentable entries of black silk stockings of which only one is whole, and of '2 Night

Cloathes burned, and one old one without Buttons 'and such like.

There are '3 papers about Phisick'; 'Sir R. Hastings' plaster for a straine,' and Luce laments that Sir Ralph has not been able to take with him his 'rose water, rose viniger, and elder viniger,' as most necessary to his comfort 'whare you intend to passe your winter.' There is very little jewelry: a few rings, 'whereof one hath 3 Diamonds like harts'; '2 silver rings of Munn's'; and a 'Bundle' of Mary's hair. Dr. Kirton at Florence thanks him for a gift of the new Paris luxury, 'the Teeth Brushes and Boxes,' but Sir Ralph replies that 'These are such inconsiderable Toyes, that I must intreate you to speake no more of them. . . .'
 'Sir, I pray tell me if it bee soe dangerous as 'tis reported, Oct. 1650. to bring an English Bible and a small booke or two of Devotion; some tell me the bookes will not only bee forfeeted, but a man may bee put into very greate trouble about them, and that the Searchers may search our pockets, and doe alwais search all Trunks and cloak Baggs for such matters. Some say 'tis better to send them before, or to cause them to bee sent over after I am there, with an addresse to some English gentleman lately come from thence, and then if any question bee made about them, noe body can suffer in it, because neither he that sent them, nor hee that they are addressed unto, is within theire reach; I pray Sir, Bee pleased to assist and direct me in this businesse . . . the well ordering of this will both hasten and conduce much to my contentment in the Jorney, for when I am alone, though I take noe pleasure in Controversies in matters of Religion, yet I cannot well bee any where for such a space of time, in this sad and sorrowfull condition without these few Bookes which are but helpes to devotion.'

In May Sir Ralph and his son are at Montpellier, famous for 'pure ayre and faire women,' having passed through Bordeaux, Toulouse, Carcassonne, 'and divers of the best towns in Languedoc'; 'the violence of the Plague and Famine' prevented their intended visit to the North of

Spain, and they settled down for some weeks at Lyons, where Sir Ralph provided Mun with a Latin master and devoted himself to answering the great budget of business letters that he had found there. The Spanish army encamped near Turin, and the 'multitude of peasants in Savoye which practise the trade of bandittis, more dangerous to travellers than the Spaniards,' make it difficult to reach Milan. Sir Ralph found Toulon and the towns on the Rhone intolerably hot in July and August, but he had a horror of Switzerland; mountain scenery being too rude for the elegant taste of a seventeenth-century gentleman. Roger North wrote of the soft beauty of the Lake country: 'We went through a plain but stony road, in the view of hideous mountains.' If this was the effect of Westmoreland, the Alps could only have been repulsive and terrible.

Evelyn, who also left England in the winter of 1643, and was tossed about by the same November storms that kept Sir Ralph and Mary so long waiting to cross the Channel, has left us a vivid picture of the discomforts of Swiss travelling. The age of flannel shirts and homespuns was not yet, and it seems an irreverence even to fancy Sir Ralph stumbling through 'an ocean of snow' on a pass, in his Paris periwig, his 'new Cambrick double ruffe cuffes,' and his 'tufted Holland Wastcoate'; or laying his 'Fine peaked Nightcap' to rest on the coarse sacking of the Swiss 'beds stuffed with leaves' thrown down on the mud floors, 'or in cupboards so high from the ground that they climbed them by a ladder.' Nor was the coach better fitted to encounter 'the greate cataract of mealted snow and other waters' which poured down Alpine roads after a sudden storm, than he himself was to put up with such 'infamous, wretched lodgings'; so he made his way to Italy.

This September the echoes of the Battle of Worcester brought dismay to the various knots of English exiles abroad; that stout Parliamentarian Sir Roger Burgoyne wrote exultingly of 'a late and very remarkable providence of God in reference to our Parliament forces,' and 'the absolute overthrow of our enemies'; but to the unwarlike

Sir Ralph it was a great sorrow to hear of more English blood being spilt by English hands.

Sir Ralph is delighted with 'the Duke of Florence's garden of Simples, his gallerie of rareities of all sorts' and the 'Miracles of art'; but Florence is 'a deare Towne for strangers'; Siena he finds 'a cheape place to live in'; Naples 'a noble rich kingdome but a bad people,' the Spaniards courteous, the Italians cloudy and jealous.

Coffee, the new 'Turkish drink,' is just coming into fashion: '2 spoonfulls in a pint of boiling water boiled by a soft fire half an hour.' Sir Ralph prefers taking it cold. Seals and stones for rings are much in request at home, and 'one Col. Atkins in Florence, at Mr. Amies the English House, hath more varietyes for stones with seales, then all Italy besides.' Dorothy Osborne tells us how the fair Saccharissa wears 'twenty strung upon a ribbon, like the nuts boys play withal,' 'the oldest and oddest are most prized'; 'oreng Flowers dried for sweetbags, are also in request.'

Sir Ralph spent Christmas of 1651 at Rome and returned thither for four months after a visit to Naples, where he found letters awaiting him 'in clusters.' He studied Italian, in which he found it difficult to converse, and both he and Mr. Cordell took much interest in Italian politics. Rome was very full; the old Pope Innocent X. was occupied with building on a magnificent scale, entertaining Spanish and Austrian princes, beheading a treacherous secretary (Moscambruno) and his accomplices, and ornamenting Ponte Sant' Angelo with their bodies.

Among the travellers there was a little quiet gossip of the kind supposed to be proper to women. Mr. Gee was not looked upon as a marrying man, but Monsieur Duval was convinced that there had been some tender passages between Mr. Cordell and Luce Sheppard. When she first announced their arrival in France, she had begun her letter to Sir Ralph with 'Tell Mr. Cordell.' Why 'tell Mr. Cordell'? Then he had lingered on at Blois after Sir Ralph's departure, had been assiduous in his visits to Jack and the

little gentlewomen ; he had left his affairs in Luce's hands, and found it necessary to write to her as many business letters as Sir Ralph did. Old Monsieur Duval shook his head, and hoped in his flowery style that Monsieur Cordell would preserve so much judgment amongst the flames of love as not to be entirely scorched up by them. Sir Ralph disbelieved the rumour ; he assured Monsieur Duval that Luce's long letters were on business only ; that Mr. Cordell read him out parts of the letters ; and that what he did not read out was doubtless of the same complexion and purport—a great deal to take for granted. Luce would not have been pleased with Sir Ralph's vehement assertions that she possessed no possible attractions, and that the gentleman had 'utterly shaken off' all thoughts of the *Damoiselle*. At last a hint reaches her, and she writes to Sir Ralph indignantly : 'I am not marryed to Mr. Cordell, nether have I any intention to mary him nor any other, more then to my Deare littall gentillwemen ; nether can I devine how this coms about unlesse it be, because wee entertaine a civill corispondance one with the other, and if that be dangerous I cannot tell then how to behave my selfe in this world.' And so ended the poor waiting-gentlewoman's shadowy little romance.

Feb. 16,
1652.

Mr. Gee and Mr. Cordell agreed better with Sir Ralph than they sometimes did with each other. 'They are now on very faire termes,' he writes, 'but they reade no more mathematicall lectures togeather . . . if it please God to bless our company with life and health wee are like to returne togeather, for though Italy is more pleasant to bee seene then France, yet (to say truth) France is much better to dwell in then Italy.' But when it came to the point Sir Ralph and Mun started alone in a coach for Venice, as the others could not tear themselves away from Rome. 'I hope you have Bussed the Lady of Loretto, and have taken a Doctorshipp at least at Padua,' writes Dr. Denton. We hear that the vetturino returned much satisfied with his fee.

The morning Sir Ralph left Rome, Mr. Cordell's young

servant Germaine 'fell in League with a Violine, and resolved to follow him,' quitting 'his Master most unhandsomely soe that hee gave him not a penny.' Sir Ralph was sorry for the boy, for 'though his parting was so vile and foolish he stole not the worth of a penny nor tooke soe much as the Razors and Sizars hee Trimmed withall.' They saw him afterwards playing in the streets, but he showed no wish to be recognised.

At Venice Sir Ralph buys for Mrs. Isham the famous drug for her family medicine chest. 'I see by your sending of me Venice trekle,' she writes, 'as you thinke I stell deale in Phisicke, but my traviles hath binne so a boutte in Englande, as I have allmost forgote all Phisicke.' 'Hee that is most famous for Treacle,' Sir Ralph notes, 'is called Sigr Antonio Sgobis, and keepes Shopp at the Strazzo or Ostridge, sopra il ponte de' Barottori, on the right hand going towards St. Mark's. His price is 19 livres (Venize money) a pound, and hee gives leaden potts with the Ostridge sigue uppon them, and Papers both in Italian and Lattin to show its virtue.' This celebrated and incredibly nasty compound, traditionally composed by Nero's physician, was made of vipers, white wine, and opium, 'spices from both the Indies,' liquorice, red roses, tops of germander, juice of rough sloes, seeds of treacle mustard, tops of St. John's wort, and some twenty other herbs, to be mixed with honey 'triple the weight of all the dry species' into an electuary. The recipe is given as late as 1739 in Dr. Quincy's 'English Dispensatory,' published by Thomas Longman at the Ship in Paternoster Row. Vipers are essential, and to get the full benefit of them 'a dozen vipers should be put alive into white wine.' The English doctor, anxious for the credit of native vipers, proves that Venice treacle may be made as well in England, 'though their country is hotter, and so may the more rarify the viperine juices; . . . yet the Bites of our Vipers at the proper time of year, which is the hottest, are as efficacious and deadly as theirs.' But he complains that the name of Venice goes so far, that English people 'please themselves much with buying a Tin Pot, at a low Price of a dirty sailor

... with directions in the Italian tongue, printed in London,' and that some base druggists 'make this wretched stuff of little else than the sweepings of their shops.' Sir Ralph could pride himself that his leaden pots contained the genuine horror. It was used as 'an opiate when some stimulus is required at the same time'; an overdose was confessedly dangerous, and even its advocates allowed that Venice treacle did not suit every one, because forsooth 'honey disagrees with some particular constitutions.' Sir Ralph is also much taken with some 'old men's house boots,' called Scarfaroni, made of felt, bound with leather, 'si tengono in piedi per stare caldo a scrivere'; these cost 8 livres a pair. He keeps the addresses of glovers and glass shops that he may order goods after his return to England.

From Venice Sir Ralph turned his face homewards, passing through Frankfort and Cologne, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and reaching Antwerp in September. There he met Dr. George Morley, a life-long friend of the Verneys, who had suffered much for the King, and was now ministering to the 'distressed English Loyalists' at Antwerp. His personal habits were such as to recommend him to Sir Ralph. He rose at five and went to bed at eleven, 'not having a fire nor his Bed warmed in the severest season of the year, nor did he eat more than once in the 24 hours.' If he had a weakness it was his dislike of the Scotch; he wrote of the 'Originall and Eppidemicall sins of that Nation, I meane lying, flattering and boosing'; yet several loyal Scotchmen were amongst his friends.

A brisk correspondence was kept up after Sir Ralph had gone on to Brussels, but Dr. Morley's long theological letters and his groans over the Dutch schismatics, which were so much to Sir Ralph's taste, would tax the patience of any modern reader. 'I woonder that Poyson should be so precious,' he wrote after going a round of the booksellers; 'I meane that Socinian bookes should be sold at so intolerable a rate.'

Dr. Morley has leisure to do many commissions for Sir Ralph: at one time he is getting 'a pound and a half of con-

serve of Marsh Mallows,' at another some embroidery for a bed. Sir Ralph complains that there are not curtains enough for his large four-poster, and 'that there is noe Vallence, soe that 'tis really but halfe a Bed, and that but a Campania Bed'; the lining, fringes, and embroidering of two extra curtains are to cost 'at least £30 sterling.' Sir Ralph made inquiries in Holland as to where he could settle Mun to finish his education. Colleges abounded, and many of the provincial towns were flourishing centres of learning. Sir Ralph had a liking for Utrecht, remembering how much his brother Edmund had profited by his studies in its newly founded university when quartered in the town as a soldier; but he thought the place too Popish. Besides the foreign professors, English exiles as tutors were a drug in the market. Younger sons of noble families, with infinite leisure and pressing pecuniary needs, were hungering for pupils; Church of England clergymen of the highest academical distinction, destined in a few years to fill her bishoprics and deaneries, were now at the lowest ebb of their fortunes, with no hope of better days. Dr. Morley knew them all, as well as Heinsius, Salmasius, and other learned Dutchmen; he was the very man, therefore, to recommend a college or a tutor. He introduced Sir Ralph to another embryo bishop staying at Ghent, formerly known to Sir Edmund Verney. Dr. Robert Creighton had been a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Regius Professor of Greek, Public Orator to the University, Chaplain to Charles I., Canon of Lincoln, &c. All this Greek and philosophy, with a great deal of combative orthodoxy besides, were running to seed till Sir Ralph came to the rescue with the offer of a handsome salary and a big-boned, lazy, good-humoured English boy as a pupil. He thought Dr. Creighton's demands too modest, and gladly named a larger sum, telling him 'that he would deserve that and more too' for his care of his son: 'This hee seemed to take very kindly.' The Doctor asked fourteen days to make his preparations, and so the matter was settled. Learned and excellent as he was, it does not appear that Dr. Creighton was very agreeable, or

that Mun approved of the arrangement. Longing to get back to England, and feeling lonely and ill-used, he had no idea with how heavy a heart his father made the entry in his calendar, the night they parted, 'Munn is gon.'

Sept. 21,
1652.

To Dr. Denton he wrote: 'In all my life I was never thus alone, for when my deare Wife went over, I had two Children and a Family which is now reduced to a little (very little) Footboy; I need not tell you how sad this makes mee.'

Sir Ralph has a sharp attack of fever at Antwerp which depresses him extremely. His cousin, Robert Spencer, urges him to come on to Brussels, as the air is much purer. Sir Ralph stays several weeks at Brussels 'au Lieuve d'Or sur la Sablone,' and Cousin Gee joins him there. They are made much of by the English colony. The Spencers and Sir Ralph support an English Church service. Mr. Spencer refers to his rooms as 'your Pallace neare my Cottage'; he is choosing black and white Flanders lace, ordered by lady friends at home: 'My Lady Lisle desires an Ebony Cabanet and for Dore or none, she leaves it to me . . . I cannot meete with one that's good, I can have choice of Tortus Shell, garnished out with very thin silver or guilt Brasse which I like much better; . . . the best choyce is at Antwerp.'

Sir Ralph is anxious to revise his will, and cannot do it away from all his papers. 'Since the last was made in 1643, he has lost both wife and daughter, and its provisions are now obsolete. 'I would doe some other things about my estate before I take any more long journeys, for I am old,' he writes wearily, 'and the times sickly.' He had just completed his fortieth year.

There is an outburst of joy amongst his friends at home at the first mention of his return. He has his own doubts about the prudence of it, and is considering whether he should conceal his name or 'lie publickly' in lodgings. He has many offers of hospitality. Mr. Wakefield has 'a little Island at Edmonton where you may bee as private as you

will desire and very wellcome.' Monsieur Duval is ready to share with him the modest rooms he is preparing for his wife near St. Martin's Church. Trusty Roger is beside himself with delight. 'I am now come to Lodgings in the Strand over against Yorke House, where if I may have the happinesse to see my dearest freind it will make my old legges to Caper, and with excess of joy.' He cannot, however, recommend the Strand. 'It is so moist a Place' that he thinks of removing into the City.

Sir Ralph prefers to be in his old neighbourhood of Covent Garden; he dislikes a boarding-house, but will not object to going to a cookshop for his meals. 'Oxford Kate dresses meate well, but I heare Oxford John as well and cheaper.' Dr. Denton, as his wife complains, neglects all his own business to run after his nephew's. Sir Ralph writes from Brussels: 'By the next I doubt not but to tell you the very day I intend to set forwards towards London. . . . I purpose to bring noe Boy with me, but I must have at least one that knowes some service, and can doe a Message; . . . if you can meet with none little, take one of 16 or 17 yeares old; if I like him not 'tis but losing his livery and leaving him behinde mee; all servants are good at first, and therefore I doubt not but to bee well served for soe small a time. I purpose to come in a Coach from Dover, with our company. . . . Order matters soe as we may chatt a whole day, before any other know I am in towne.' He returns several times to the important matter of the foot-boy: 'One that knows service and can doe a Message hansomly is of more use to me at present then anything, which I doubt noe Raw Country Boy can doe. . . . If Sir Tho. Hewyt, Nattycock, or Aunt Sherard had such a Boy, I would take the liberty to borrow him for a moneth, which is the most I intend to stay in England, at this Bout; and then return him to them againe in his old Livery and take away mine. This is ordinarily done, both here and in France, therefore I presume it will not bee woondered at in England, but that you know best and must tell me.' He has some thoughts of bringing over the boy who waits upon him at

Dec 28,
1652.

Brussels, 'though hee know noe more English then I doe Hebrew; . . . hee is honest and drinckes only water.' He writes again: 'I love not to take a servant with a friend, for all servants tattle. . . . If my Lady Lisle's boy bee fit, and shee will part with him without thinking she doth me a favour, I shall take him, though, 'tis hazardous taking any from persons in authority, for when they are corrected, they may tell tales and accuse or betray a Master. . . . Court noe body to come to me, but if you take any, let them learne to order Wiggs.'

Mrs. Isham, who of old took a lively interest in 'the chases in Hide Park,' thus instructs him in the fashions: 'There are Pages in trunks [trunk hose] that ride behind the coches, but not many, I know none of your acquaintance that has one but Sir Arthur Haslerigg, and yet I never saw him behind a coch. He is in cloath trunks billited or garded with velvet, silver sword, and silver buckles on his shoes, and silk stockings.'

Dr. Denton has heard of a house 'on the right hand going towards Russell St., with a faire dining Roome, little lodging chamber, and a good closet of a Floore, and the same againe over head, and a garret or two with chimnies above. The price was 15s. a Woeke, but being now better furnished 20s. is the price; the people are very good and dresse meate well and simply; use only the lower Roomes for themselves, and have no children only one Neece. . . . Mrs. Dubbles' house is neare it and better furnished, but she dresses noe meate.' Sir Ralph desires him to 'take such as are best furnished, staires lightest, the Roomes fairest and fewest children, and see the chimnies smoke not.' London lodgings have since grown dearer and dingier, for Dr. Denton succeeded in finding a fair chamber, 'which hath a partition in it, where your man may ly, on the first floore, with a very large french grey cloath bed, lined with scarlett sarsenett; the next chamber over against it, and a light study, for 15s. p. weeke.'

Dr. Morley has been writing to Mr. Secretary Nicholas about getting him a pass; a magnificent document arrives,

sealed with the Dutch lion rampant, and the bundle of seven arrows in his paw, addressed by the States-General of the United Netherlands to all generals, colonels, admirals, vice-admirals, captains, lieutenants, scouts, and common soldiers, on horse or on foot, by sea or by land, to allow Sir Ralph Verney to go on his way in peace. Mrs. Spencer, her son Edward, and a daughter are to go to England under the escort of Sir Ralph and Cousin Gee.

Mr. Spencer reminds Sir Ralph, 'seeing the keeping of lawes groweth againe in request,' that he must continue to send his 10*l.* a year for the support of the English minister: 'Heere are playes and the Traineaux runne round, I see none of them but sit in the chimney-corner and get a nap to keep me from being giddy, now the world runnes round.' He bitterly laments Sir Ralph's departure. 'To what end did you cause me to make my walke broader for to walke alone?' Jan. 17,
1653.

Mr. Spencer's sketches of Brussels society are very bright, though he was himself confined to the house: 'Sepulchrum meum domus mea est.' 'This is no contemptible place where there are playes every day, shooting at Papegeau, fighting with the 2 handed swords, great Tours à la mode, the Prince of Condé royally feasted by many of the nobility; Balles, where the Ladyes appeare in all their beauty, both naturall and artificiall, where the Prince of Condé, a curious dancer, danceth with the fairest one after another. But I saw none of these things. . . . I was reading a treatise about the Pope's infallibility, and am now sufficiently satisfied that there is no such thing as an infallible chaire, not your Speaker's in England, nor the Pope's heere.'

There are most interesting complications in the travelling party. 'The truth is,' writes Sir Ralph, 'Mrs. Spencer's eldest daughter and my companion in my Travells are like to couple,' but 'Mum for this.' In such agreeable society Mr. Gee was drawn out of his love of 'Carthusian silence.' Mr. Spencer thanks him for his great care of Mrs. Spencer during the voyage, and a little later a friend who had

March 20,
1653.

known him only in his unsociable moods hears with surprise that 'Mr. Gee has fallen the way of all flesh, and is married again.' Sir Ralph writes from London to the bride's father, after a Sunday wedding: 'I cannot but expresse some part of my joy to you, as well as them for the happy conclusion of that greate worke.'

When they return to Brussels, in June, Sir Ralph goes with them to Rochester; Edward Spencer writes: 'The pleasantnesse of the waies and the weather, and the good humour of our coachman and his horses, brought us last night safe to Dover; . . . my mother would have forced you not only hither, but to have tasted a sillibub, in a new sillibub pot at Bruxelles.' They had been fired upon by an English ship, and had pursued 'a Hamburger,' and arrived at last at Dunkirk much worn out.

Mr. Robert Spencer welcomes home 'my dearest, my sonne and daughter and my sonne Gee.' The Gees seem to have settled in 'the Pallace,' and Mr. Spencer handed over to his son-in-law the care of providing an English service at Brussels. Mr. Gee found it no easy task, and thus pours out his troubles to Sir Ralph: 'Wee have now gott a Confessor, to morrow hee beginning to preach and wee to censure, wee shall not bee above 2 or 3 gathered together and I beleewe wee shall be in as many factions. Some or one I heare thinks preaching once a fortnight enough for those who have thus long rubbed out without it, another that since wee have soe long wanted wee can never have enough, and soe wee must have the precious word held out to us twice a Sunday and every time a new prayer both before and after sermon; this is there language soe you may beleewe some body shortly will have cause to regreat his readinesse to serve.' The minister has been installed, and he writes again: 'Wee once a weeke pray and Preach, as yett without Disturbance, but i beleewe our Reigne will not be long, for by your absence wee are to seeke how to proportion our Minister's allowance since my L^d: G: [Gorges] will not be drawne beyond his first offer and there are noe other contributors but our ffamily. The Preacher is for ought I heare of Life unblameable, and seriously preaches

exceeding well, but he must thinke of returning if any more of his congregation forsake this place.'

Mrs. Gee is devoted to her parents, and unable to leave them, owing to 'The good gentleman's indisposition, and the good lady's resolve to take the Spa waters in her velvet bed, rather then leave him without any other company then a troublesome gout and melancholy considerations of the inconvenience of her absence.' Sir Ralph makes particular inquiries after the bride's health, and her husband writes: 'My wife is much your servant, but when I told her of your question, she looked nine waies at once, and gave you noe answer.' He then writes affectionately about her and their happy hopes. 'God blesse the Babby that is coming,' replied Sir Ralph.

Mr. Spencer concludes his letter with a little joke, common to all Sir Ralph's friends during the next forty years: 'I guesse you are looking out for a Cornelia to governe your house, and keepe you warme next winter, so that you will need none of my woodpile, jambon, nor tongue.' Old Aunt Ursula is busy in the same direction. 'She is much your humble servant, and is providing you with a wife; a virgine about 30 yeares old, 1000*l.* p. ann: in possession, 1000*l.* p. ann: more in reversion, all in England; and 1000*l.* per ann: more in Ireland. But she is a papist. . . . This will be a motive as stronge as a Loadstone to bringe you home.'

'Teach me to answer to my Catechize,' writes Cousin Gee. 'Quest: Is not your freind Sir Ralph Verney married? Answ: Wherere I goe I am posed and must bee soe till you informe me, nor till then will I wish you joy.'

The object of so much solicitude replies: 'As yet I can answer your Worshipp's Question and saifly say: Your servant R. V. is not married, nor for ought hee knowes, (notwithstanding your good example) one jott nearer it, then when you left him. Neverthelesse hee cannot justly complaine of any Woeman's unkindnesse, since none did ever yet deny him.' For the best of all reasons (Mrs. Gee reminded him), as he had never asked another woman to fill Mary's place in his heart and home.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONCERNING CHILDREN AND THEIR BREEDING.

1650-1654.

BEFORE Sir Ralph gets back to Claydon and plunges into his home business a word must be said of the children of the family, about whom he was now specially concerned: his own two boys, Mun and Jack, their cousins Peg and Moll Eure, and his god-daughter Nancy Denton, 'Doctor's girle,' whom both these judicious men combined to pet and spoil.

Sir Ralph was devoted to girls: he ceased not to mourn his little daughter's loss, but he extended this fatherly love to his numerous nieces, 'she-cousins,' and god-daughters. He was never too busy to answer the childish letters they wrote him in large text hand; and when the children grew up into maidens, he was still the kind adviser and wise confidant to whom they poured out the more complicated troubles of youth, and appealed if the older members of the family were to be coaxed into granting a favour, or forgiving a girlish indiscretion. Sir Ralph was their humble servant, whether he was wanted to choose them some 'modish' lace and ribbons, or to prevent an invitation being sent by their parents to an unwelcome suitor. Nancy, his god-daughter and special favourite, still continued to address him as 'Deare Parent' when she was herself a matron with a son at Oxford and a marriageable daughter. His relations with Margaret and Mary Eure were equally affectionate: they asked his advice in their difficulties, as their mother had done before them, and indeed still did, though she was now under the protection of a third husband.

While girls of all ages excited Sir Ralph's reverent admiration, and could always command his services, boys were a trouble and a weariness to him: he had never been a boy himself, and did not understand the species. He was far too good a man not to perform conscientiously all the graver duties of a father; and the intimate correspondence between him and his sons when they came to man's estate shows the solid friendship that existed between them. But he was over-anxious and severe; he would come down upon some childish fault with a sledge-hammer blow which Mary's tact would have warded off; and because of his desire that his eldest son should maintain the traditions of the family, and be a worthy owner of Claydon, he judged him more severely than his younger brother. Edmund and John Verney belonged to the unhappy generation of young Englishmen who were cut off from public school and college life. The discipline of Eton and Winchester, the noisy fun of the playing fields, the rivalries and friendships of Oxford and Cambridge, were all unknown to boys whose parents dragged out weary years of exile in the provincial towns of France and the Low Countries, or danced attendance on the Stuarts in Paris and at the Hague. Sir Ralph spared no expense for tutors. 'Mun's breeding costs me more than you imagen,' he wrote to Dr. Denton, 'and I would rather save it in anything then that.' But at least one French master, Durand, turned out badly, and had to be dismissed 'for his Drinking and Lyeing,' and Sir Ralph discovered later that others had neglected their proper work, and tried to infuse into the boys' minds 'the poison of Popish doctrine.'

Edmund was not quite seven years old when he left home. During the eighteen months that Mary was looking after her husband's affairs in England, he sadly missed his mother's tender care, and at thirteen he lost her altogether. Instead of spending his holidays in scampering on his pony about the park at Claydon, in watching the decoys with the keeper, or hawking in 'the Great Sea Wood,' he had been brought up amidst the petty decorums and

restraints of a small French town. There was some out-of-door life in the autumn, when the whole population of Blois turned out for the grape-gathering, and there was fun, not of the best kind, at the time of the annual fair, when the boys generally managed to get into mischief.

Sir Ralph himself as a young man had never cared for field sports : he could ride for miles when business demanded it, but he never thought of exercise for health or pleasure. Cricket and football were yet unknown at our public schools ; but even their antique predecessors, marbles, hoops, and hopscotch, must have been more amusing than the fencing and dancing which Mun and Jack were so punctiliously taught. When Mun is said to be 'sluggish' in his ways as a youth, and apt to lounge over the fire in slovenly attire, these drawbacks of his boyhood must not be forgotten. While Sir Ralph was buried in his letters, and Luce Sheppard watched over the proprieties, it could scarcely have been seemly in the little house for Mun and Jack to indulge in such noisy games as boys love and require.

Sir Ralph during his wife's absence had corresponded with her about his educational anxieties. 'Mun, poore childe, is a woefull schollar, though neither himselfe nor Master will belceve it.' 'Mun,' he writes again, 'fearing his last letter would not please you, the carracter beeing small, hath now writt againe, and expects an answare, therefore you had best write him word you like this, but dislike the other ; charge him to bee a good Boy and learne hard, and let him bid his sister doe soe too ; and then make large promises what you will bring them out of England.

Feb. 10, 1647. . . . Now if you like it . . . I would have André come every day to teach Munn the gittarr and to sing to it, for the Lute is soe tedious a thing that I doubt (unlesse hee made it his whole businesse) hee would never play well ; but this hee may doe, and not neglect his lattin, and also learne to singe with it.' A friend describes how 'Your sonn Mr. Munn,' aged eleven, 'did us the favour last Fryday to repeate some verses out of Virgil to us, which he did so well, that hee therby acquired honnour both to himselfe and

March 10, 1647.

March 17, 1647.

Master. Our gentlemen here sayeing they never saw the like, and I am confident they did not dissemble.' The tutor reports: 'Il faict merueille. . . Je luy raconte une histoire en François, il me la rend (extempore) en Latin.' Sir Ralph writes to Mun from Paris: 'I have taken order with the Gittarr Master to send me a fine Gittare for you when I send for it, but first I will see whether you deserve it; . . . for if you have not studded it hard in my absence, a worse shall serve your turne.'

Sir Ralph became a perfect oracle about the cost of education and board in France, even to the price of extras, 'their extraordinaries,' as he calls them, that inexperienced boarders ordered between meals, 'and the fees to the Hostess' that must be presented on leaving. 200*l.* a year was considered a proper allowance for an English youth who was to be boarded in a good French family; 'they will keepe him a footboy, and procure him an able man that shall bee his Tutor both in Greeke and Lattin; and also pay for all his other exercises, as Mathematike, Dancing, Fencing, Riding, Musick, and Language Master, and finde him good cloathes of all sorts, gloves, ribbons, etc., and pocket money also in a reasonable way. . . . Bookes, paper, Instruments, both for Musick, and the Mathematicks, and further in case he should bee sick, they will provide Doctor, Apothecary, and a keeper.'

It had been settled before Mary's death that Sir Ralph's aunt, Mrs. Sherard, should send her two little girls, Margaret and Mary Eure, to France under the care of Luce Sheppard. Mary was a sensitive and delicate child, suspected of having the king's evil. The lawful sovereign of England was a wanderer and an exile, and, even if he could be approached, they doubted whether his touch would have its full virtue, as he was not a crowned and anointed King. In these delicate circumstances Mrs. Sherard resolved to send Mary to be 'touched' by the young Louis XIV. 'Sweet Nephew,' she wrote, 'I have after A long debate with my selfe sent my tow gurlles where I shall desier youre care of them that they may be taught what is fite for them as y^e reding of y^e'

May 15,
1650.

french tong and to singe and to dance and to right [spelling was not a necessary accomplishment] and to playe of y^e gittar, if it may not be dangorous for them to cast them areye [awry], for yt my eldist gurle is apt tow, if lewcey have not A great care of her. . . I have keep^t A strickt hand over them, soe I desier as Lewcey may, and not to leave them at any time allone with any of ther masters that teacheth them ther exersisis, for tow much familiaritey will give them tow great A boldness. If you pleas to have A care of this my tow jewelles you will for ever oblige me.'

Sir Ralph writes most kindly to Luce about the arrangements for the 'tow jewelles': 'I most justly owe (and shall ever pay) their mother a perpetual respect for many favours, but espetially for her constant kindnesse and affection to my deare deare wife, being bound to honour all that loved her.' Dr. Denton's little girl was coming with them, and Sir Ralph asks 'at large, what she may spend, what she should learne, and how she should bee disposed and ordered.' The child is to work chiefly at Latin, which is to make her of service to her father 'and a reproach to all that know her,' by which it would appear that English ladies had dropped the study of Latin since the days of Lady Jane Grey. Little Nancy Denton is sick when her cousins start from Rye, so she is left behind to be under her father's care, and goes for change of air to Claydon Rectory; but Sir Ralph greatly regrets it, as he had found her a home in a family of good position, with '2 very pretty well bred children, that would have taught Nancie more French in a moneth than 20 Masters would have donn in a yeare.'

Luce writes to Sir Ralph of their voyage: 'Sir, I pray tell Mr Cordell that wee cam over in a sheepe, and not in a schallope. I durst not venture the gentillwemen in a schallope, because I had never passed in any my selfe, the schallopes are thay say, the freest from robbers and doe pase much this summer time, but the schallopes are open to all wheather, and I am suer most in danger of being cast away, the seas are very full of pirats, yet thankes be to God our passage was free from all danger. . . . S^t wee are lodged neere the

rue deournon if you please to direct your letters chez madam marye, dans le rue de petit lion, au plat degele au fourburge St. Jarmin, A paris: this streete goeth into the rue detournon.'

Sir Ralph's books had been seized by the Custom House officers. Luce Sheppard was therefore bringing him out more books, physic, and miscellaneous goods from Dr. Denton.

'Hobs de corpore politico, Judges Judged, Young clearks June 12, 1650.
guide, The exercitation answered, 2 faire warnings and their answer, An Anatomie of Independencie, Extract of Malt, Sal Chalyb: 6 case knives, 1 blew knife for Mun, 4 paire of Gray stocking, 4 paire of thred stocking, 2 bookes of Dr Taylors in Quires, one is a new one, and 1 Shelton in blew pap^r to teach y^e boyes to write short hand'; an art still practised by the Verneys of Claydon.

Luce wishes to leave Paris because of the 'chargeableness of the place.' 'The children are very well, and love french potage, espesially Miss Margreat.' Sir Ralph makes use of Luce to look after a horse to be sold, and to see to the renewing of 'an old periwig, I long since sent towards Paris by an English gentleman, but hee sine uppon the way, sent it me back again.' Sir Ralph's coachman is to wait for it, 'but Munday being Hallowday it hendered the man from working and by that resonne the periwige is not dri enough to cary.'

Mrs. Sherard hopes 'as Lewcy will wach the phirst Aug. 6, 1650.
oppertewnity for to have Mary touched.' Luce hears that the young French king is not yet 'consecrated as they call it,' so she is doubtful whether his touch will be effectual after all; and 'the French say that there is noe other cerimoney then for the scicke to passe by the king, and he toucheth the wound and saith, I touch and God healeth.'

The children are to be kept hard at their lessons as much as they be 'capabull' of. Sir Ralph recommends St. Germain, but Luce writes that no teaching is to be had, 'for July 24, 1650.
when the inglish court is thare thay have masters from paris att a very highe rate, but my Lady Browne telleth mee of a

place about a mile and half from Paris, which is a very good aire and standeth close by the water side; it is called Shaleau where masters from Paris will willingly goe.' Money having 'grone very low,' Luce felt she could wait no longer and started off for Blois. Unknown to her 'they lay in a house at Paris where the Measells was.' Mary first and then Margaret sickened at Orleans, causing a delay 'which was neither for their pleasure nor their profit.'

Sept. 18,
1650.

Sir Ralph looks forward to Luce's help in his house-keeping, as she had been trained by Mary. 'Nan Castle [his own maid] can doe all well, but hold her tongue, Luce shall now governe her, she is cleanly and makes better pottage then puddings.' They reach Blois at last; poor little Mary, not having been sufficiently pulled down by the mensles, is immediately ordered to have 'an Ishue,' and 'the small pocks came out upon Peg More.' At the same time Sir Ralph writes: 'After dinner my deare Jack fell sick of fever, but by the blessing of my good God, hee is reasonable well recovered, and hee is not violent.' Any anxiety about his children makes Sir Ralph miss their mother afresh. 'The Wise man tells us that a Vertuous Woman is a Crowne to her Husband,' and St. Paul styles 'the Woman the Glory of the man—alas, my Crowne is fallen from my head & my Glory buried in obscurity.'

It is painful to have to record that Sir Ralph was very unsound on the subject of girls' education. Of his own dear little daughter he once wrote: 'Pegg is very backward . . . I doubt not but she will be schollar enough for a Woeman.' In forbidding to girls all serious intellectual studies, he differed hopelessly from Dr. Denton, who was modern enough to have managed a Girls' High School. In a letter about Nancy, Sir Ralph breaks out 'Let not your girle learne Latin, nor Short hand; the difficulty of the first may keepe her from that Vice, for soe I must esteeme it in a woeman; but the easinesse of the other may bee a prejudice to her; for the pride of taking Sermon notes, hath made multitudes of woemen most unfortunate.' 'Dr. Doctor, teach her to live under obedience, and whilst

she is unmarried, if she would learne anything, let her aske you, and afterwards her husband, *At Home*. Had St. Paul lived in our times I am most confident hee would have fixt a Shame upon our woemen for writing (as well as for their speaking) in the Church.'

Miss Nancy had her own views, which she scrawled in a large text-hand. 'Deara god father, I now sho my boldnes July 1652. unto you supposseng that youer goodnes is so gret that I dar to presum of it, but not without besegn youer parden, and I wold intrete you ser, to present my sarves unto my coussens and i know you and my coussenes wil out rech me in french, but i am a goeng whaar i hop i shal out rech you in ebri grek and laten, praeng you ser if i may be so bould as to desier on leter from you, then shuld i thing myshelf veri much bound unto you, ser, resteng youer veri loveng dater, Anne Denton.' Her father adds a postscript: 'I need not tell you this is ex puris naturalibus, and I hope it will give you as good content as if Nat. Hobart or Selden had writt it for her.' Old Selden was still alive, and he and Sir Ralph had many friends in common, notably Archbishop Usher and Sir Edward Herbert.

Sir Ralph replies with much tenderness, but he stands to his guns.

To D's Girl.

'MY DEAR CHILDE,—nothing but yourselfe, could have July 27,
1652. beene soe welcome as your letter, nor have surprized mee more, for I must confesse I did not think you had beene guilty of soe much learning as I see you are; and yet it seems you rest unsatisfied or else you would not threaten Lattin, Greeke, and Hebrew too. Good sweet hart bee not soe covitous; beleeve me a Bible (with y^e Common prayer) and a good plaine cattichisme in your Mother Tongue being well read and practised, is well worth all the rest and much more sutable to your sex; I know your Father thinks this false doctrine, but bee confident your husband will bee of my oppinion. In French you cannot bee too cunning for that language affords many admirable bookes fit for you as Romances, Plays, Poetry, Stories of illustrious (not learned)

Woemen, receipts for preserving, makinge creames and all sorts of cookeryes, ordning your gardens and in Breif all manner of good housewifery. If you please to have a little patience with yourselfe (without Hebrew, Greeke, or Lattin) when I goe to Paris againe I will send you halfe a dozen of the french bookes to begin your Library. In the meane time I know you will endeavour to understand them, and do me soe much right, as to beleeve that above all others, I am sweet heart, your most affectionate and humble servant.'

- During Sir Ralph's absence Luce Sheppard sent him
- May 1651. constant reports of the three children. 'Mr John is very well and about 2 dayes scince the mesuex [Messieurs] barbies and Mr Cotton [afterwards Sir Robert Cotton of Combermere, and one of 'Mistress Margaret's' many suitors] had him to the comedy where they were very late, but the gentillmen very civilly rendering Mr John att his lodging, the doore being allready shut, the gentillmen would have had Mr John gone and layen with them; but hee discretely answered them with thankes, that hee would not lye out of his lodging for 5 pistoles.' 'I am now amakeing Mr John som new clothes and thinke to make use of the shortest scarlet cloke. . . . Madam Juselier would have put us out of her house, in hopes to have had 2 pistoles a month for her chamber of a french man, but when shee saw her plote was spoiled, and that I had taken other lodgings, shee then imploied all her frinds to keepe us heare.' 'I beleeve Mr John groweth very studious, for madam Testard telleth mee shee findeth him att his study in the morning in his bed, with 2 bookes together of laten and french; hee looketh tall in his brichches.' The little crooked legs, 'his only fault,' as his mother used to say fondly, are still a trouble; but Luce continues: 'Dr Testard would not let mee have any thing made to ware upon his leags, for hee saith that will but ware them more, and truly sir thay are not much seene now his stocking is wrinkeled downe over them.' 'I doe not find hee holdeth out his belly so much as hee did; Madame Testard confarmes mee in my belcevol: truly I thinke shee is a good woman and is carefull of Mr John
- May 14,
1651.
- May 28,
1651.
- July 30,
1651.

S^r I thinke it will bee to noe purpose to make M^r John a stufe clocke, for the summer is farre spent and so is his stufe sute; and hee telleth mee that he doth not find his cloke which hee hath troublesome notwithstanding the heate.' Dr. Denton remarks on the report sent him of the child's health. 'Mons^r Jean his swelled leggs and great belly looks so like a dropsy. It is not usuall in children . . . at the best it argues a very weake liver. Steele is the thinge must doe him good.'

Luce is devoted to her 'littell gentillwemen,' and anxious they should have their social rights. She complains that 'the lord allington and his governor use littell sivilty whare thare was so much oblygation,' but a few days later she reports that 'Lord Allington groweth very kind; he invited M^r John to dine with him very earnestly, meeting him coming from Church'—which honour, with the shyness of an English schoolboy, Mr. John emphatically declined—'he went not, nor will not goe'! In August: 'M^r John hath binne ill of the toothake and feverish, and was once let blud, but now thankes be to God hee is well againe and goeth to schoole and begineth to make theames; Madam Testard hath bought M^r John a dixsonary by his master's direction.'

The accounts of Mistress Mary are delightful. She is never strong, and, in spite of much severe medical treatment, 'continueth as shee did, but is allwayes merry and in good humour according to custome.' The Testards have lost a daughter with fever, 'and the litell boy which was so joyly, sickened when his mother did and died four days after her, so for the present thare is a very sad Famely.' Jack himself writes a letter full of heroic resolutions, which may be held to contain the Whole Duty of Boy at ten years old. He will study his books and take pains with his guitar; he never will, and never did, spend his money in 'frute and gun-powder'; he will never play with naughty street boys, nor stand about at the fair when the sun is hot; he will not eat cherries nor do anything else that Madam Testard and Mademoiselle Luce disapprove; nor ever disoblige the best of fathers. Luce adds: 'As neere as wee

May 19,
1652.

Sept. 8.
1652.

can, wee will keep him from eateing any raw Frute, and for milke I beleeeve hee eateth not any. . . . When hee is strong it will be very necessary to have him dance, for thare is nothing adresseth the body so much as that.'

Oct. 6,
1652.

'Mr John is better and begineth his excercise againe to writ and to designe,' but he is still kept to the house, and Luce has 'to give him sun money to divert him and to take his mind off from going to Dr Testard's "vandang blanch"; . . . thare is a monstrous deall of wine this yeare, so they that com to Bloys may drinke au bonn marche, thare is thought will be left grapes unvandanged [Luce's British French accent is audible across the two centuries and a half] to fill at the least 6 or 8 thousand poynsous.' In July 1653 Mr. John has had the smallpox, but Madame Testard 'beleeeves he will not be marked; noe master goeth to him yet, for his eyes must needes be weake.' Jack has his mother's merry spirits; 'he riseth in the morning by 6 a clake of his owne accord, and sings and danceth without cease.'

Dec. 24,
1652.

Of the girls Luce writes: 'As for Miss Margaret, she is, Thankes be to God, a very helthy and wholesum child, and in my opinion will make a hansum woman; . . . she is much in esteeme with the french ladyes. But Miss Margaret doth not lerne any exercise so soone as her sister doth; and yet shee taketh as much or more paines. Miss Mary hath a very quicke witte, and very endustriues, and capable to lerne any thing, and if it please God shee be perfectly cured, it will bee the greatest hapines that ever I had in this world. . . . Mr John nor Miss Margreat never have any chilblains nether doe they ware furr gloves, but Miss Mary wareth furr gloves, not that shee hath had any chilblains this yeare one her hands att all, but shee hath chilblains one her feet, but noe great matters. . . . Sir Rich: Browne told mee when hee passt by, that our king had of late healed a peasent which was most desperusly roten with the evell.'

Sir Ralph did not wish to educate Mun and Jack together; he had oft observed 'snarling and disagreement

betweene brothers soe kept in couples, & their age & humours are so different they will doe better asunder.' He considers France 'the fittest place in the world to breed up youth,' and wishes to place Mun in 'that civill country' with young Henry Newton.

This plan fell through. Sir Henry sent his son to Dr. Duport at Trinity College, Cambridge, and Mun was left at the Hague with Dr. Creighton. The boy was overgrown and weak; his governor wishes to consult Myen Herr Skatt (or Schottl),¹ who has a great reputation at Utrecht for his treatment of crooked spines and limbs. 'That rare man hath wrought a miracle upon my Lord Gerard. . . . If they be young, the sooner are they cured, and he selldome undertakes old people, becaus invetrate ills especiallie when they come by nature are hardlier removed; yett hath he done such cures to wonder, upon some of 50 yeares and upward, but selldomer: from the craddle to the ages of 30 or 40 ar his patients, all sexes, ranks, qualities, and conditiones, and young people have beene brought to him from further then the uttmost parts of Shetland or the Orcades, even from Swedland, Denmark, Holsteyne, &c. And this is his way, If when he look upon the partie he fynd the disease curable he undertaks it, and wth out bargayne expects such an honest reward as the partie is or willing or able to bestow; and trulie I could never lerne or heare but that he was an exceeding honest conscientious man. If he sees nature so defective or so much collapsed that it is incurable, he will not undertake it. . . he misseth not one of a thousand.' 'Mun's backbone in which all the fault lies, is quyt awry, and his right shoulder half a handfull lower at least then his left. Herr Skatt hath undertaken the cure, if your sonne will stay heere three quarters of a yeare; and alldadie he is about to make harnessing for

Jan. 28,
1653

¹ Mr. Muirhead Little quotes this correspondence under 'Treatment of Spinal Curvature 250 years ago' in the *British Medical Journal*, July 11, 1903; he thinks that Skatt was an artificer rather than a professional surgeon, as his name is not to be found in the Dutch archives.

him, which your sonne is very willinge, for ought I can perceive, to undergo, though in all things els he is not a little wedded to his fancie.' 'Mr. Skatt desired he should be kept fro' cold, eate no hadd meate, no oysters, nor such things as might endanger his health.'

Feb. 18,
1653.

Sir Ralph replies: 'Tis usual with some of that profession, to make very imoderate demands, not only for theire paines and skill, but also for such bathes, Oyntments, Irons, and such like matters as shall bee requisite for the worke. . . tis best agreeing with him for altogether in grosse.'

July 8,
1653.

Mun's 'harness' is very irksome, especially in hot weather, and he complains that it galls him; but his governor reports in six months' time: 'I may truly say the cure is almost perfyted, yet whilst he is under Herr Skatt, I think it wer no wayes for his good to remove him. My intention was to convey him to Leyden for his learneing, but I now conceive it was God's great mercie to send us hither from the Hague for rectifceing of his body; the soule will (I hope) follow the better.' Edmund's own account is: 'Je suis extremement creu depuis peu, je crois que je suis aussi haut, si je ne suis plus haut que mon cousin Spenser.'

July 15,
1653.

Dr. Creighton writes again: 'He is very well, grows apace, and of his crookednes so almost wholly restored, that very little difference is to be seene; and when his clothes and cloak is on without his harness none at all, yet he weares his harness for the most part continuallie, and must I am afrayed till the next spring by which tyme Herr Skatt doth not doubt but to make him a perfynt man: and in the meane tyme becaus the weather is very hott in these moneths, he permitts him sum tymes for a two or 3 dayes together ease him self of his harness, and go in his single doublett, which I say he condiscends unto meerly to ease him from wearing iron bodies continuallie, though they be very light, and I think might well be borne at all tynes, and wer farr better borne, then left off at any tyme till the cure be finished.'

The discomforts which the tutor felt were so easy (for some one else) to bear, come out vividly in Mun's letters, though the boy does not complain. The iron body fits

tightly back and front, lined with quilted fustian or soft leather; it is fastened by Herr Skatt over his linen shirt; Mun can neither undo it nor ease any undue pressure. His shirt in hot weather is always wet, but he cannot change it. Once a week he goes with his clean shirt over his arm, to have the armour taken off; his shirt and the leather lining are then 'as black as a chimney.' It does not appear that the skin was washed even at the weekly dressing, only that the leather lining was renewed—'*ma peau est toute ostée de sur mon estomach . . . et cela m'avoit mangé un trou dans ma chair*'—at such times Herr Skatt applies a plaster. Sir Ralph asks whether the shirt could not be changed twice a week, but Mun replies that the great man has more than 2,000 patients—men and women, boys and girls—that he could never get through his work if they all came twice a week, and that many keep on the harness for a month together.

The tutor continues his report: 'He growes apace upon my worde; in height ther is but little difference betweene him and I. He loves his case very well, and his owne will above all things, and though in truth I cannot accuse him of any vice or scandall, he is civill and temperat, yet he loves his bedd too well, and is very willfull, for the which two defaults I entreat you hartlie to chide him, for upon my worde he deserves it. For his relligione I do perceive you are very sollicitous, and what I told you befor I tell you againe, he is a true protestant, for ought I can perceive, for surely he understands no other, & it is to me admirable those that in your house of Bloy perverted him should so ill ground him; he is so farr from being able to defend any poynt of the contrary religion that he understands none . . . I could never breake him of any custome or draw him one inch from his will. All the morning till twelf of clock he sitts wth his brest unbuttoned, his breeches unclasped, his stockings untied about his heeles sommer and winter; if winter he hovers over a fyre, if sommer sitts in a chayre so ill-favouredly that you wold take him for a skullion, till he buckle up to dinner when the clock striks twelf. I myself

have beene oft ashamed to see, but tell him till doomes day, he never shall amend anything, so obstinat is he in what he once doth; God mend all I beseech God, and bless you and yours.'

Sept. 15,
1653.

Sir Ralph writes severely to his son, whom he calls 'a wilful clown': 'Your childhood is now over, soe that you can noe longer be excused by it. Beeleeve me Mun I know your guilt and am hartily grieved to finde that no advice of mine (and of such as I have placed over you) hath heatherto had the power to make you quitt your Lazy, Slovenly and ungentlemanlike quallities.'

June 21,
1663.

It is doubtful whether the obstinacy of which Dr. Creighton complained so hotly was a monopoly of his pupil's. Dr. Morley, when asked by Sir Ralph to urge some course upon the tutor, replied oracularly, 'Dr. Creighton is a Scotchman, and you know they are hardly to be removed from an opinion they once are possessed with, though it be a bad one.' Mun must have been as much aggravated as Mr. Pepys was, by the very tone of the Doctor's voice. 'To church and slept all the sermon,' writes that worthy, 'the Scot, to whose voice I am not to be reconciled, preaching.' But as Mun was the sole recipient of Creighton's sermons in 1653, he had not Pepys' refuge of being able to sleep through them.

Dr. Creighton is anxious about the education of his own son, who will have to earn his bread. Sir Ralph promises to take him as page for a year or two, when he will learn French, if his mother will see that he can write, read, and cast accounts.

In the meanwhile Luce Sheppard had been 'a thrifty & careful husband' of Sir Ralph's goods. As engagements multiply in England, he has to give up his plan of returning to Blois, so he writes long letters to Luce about despatching his more valuable possessions to Claydon, and disposing of the rest. 'I shall sell the old fether beds,' Luce writes, 'with all the expedition I can; but I feare att very low rates, because the tickes are old, & the fethers but hens and capons fethers. I will if I can sell the 2 great fether beds

also for thay of all your goods are subject to wett in carryage.' She expects to get 'nine sols the pound for the great fether beds.' Mr. Gee is sending from Brussels: 'Sir Ralph's 4 swords tyed up in browne paper 2 & 2 together: 6 chafing dishes & one bundle of Rootes to rubbe the teeth.'

Jack is to travel home with Peg and Moll Eure. Sir Ralph wishes to make a handsome present to Madame Testard. 'I thinke my best looking glasse will bee a fit thing to give . . . tell me if it bee not enough, and what I had best add to it. . . . I think 'tis fit to give Monsieur Papin or his wife something for their care of my goods . . . my second greate glasse may doe well, and my little Wooden Screene that goes on a screw, tell me if the foulding screene frame is sould or not. . . . Take out the English knives from the little white wooden Box . . . to give Madame Testard or any other and then they will thinke they com purposely from England for them.' Luce gives '2 single knives one of Charing cross haft, the other of seale-skine to Madame Testard's children . . . with a white crowne, for her children love money above anything.' Sir Ralph's 'Theorhoe,' and 'a new slate shuite & Cloake' that he had made for himself, are to be sent to Mun if 'they may bee gotton to Brussels for about a Pistole.'

'2 or 3 able D^s of Physick att Paris' are to 'consulte Aug. 1653 together about Mistresse Mary what may be the best way to govorn her, and D^r Cosin has spoken to "the King" about touching her, & he is graciously pleased to doe her this favour.' Luce is advised to hurry up to Paris; when she arrives 'his majesty has fallen very sicke,' so there are more delays. 'Clothes, lodging and diet ware ne'ere these excessive rates as they are att, att present'; the careful Luce will buy nothing she can possibly do without; if Jack is cold he must 'ware his old drape de seau just a corps over his summer sute.' Mary was finally touched by Charles II. 'The littell gentlewomen are both very well, onliscicke for new clothes'—a malady which still attacks English and American ladies in Paris. Luce and 'her little troope' according to Nov. 1653. 'her Lady sheepe's orders' are expected at Dover: they are

to take seven days in a waggon from Paris to Calais, but they are detained a week at Abbeville, the country being full of soldiers, and they can proceed only with a costly and troublesome guard.

There are better accounts of Edmund; he 'embraces his studies with more cheerfulness and industry.' 'In Christmas holidays which is heere yet observed,' Dr. Creighton writes, 'he wold be loath to be pinched in his allowances. He hath now three Masters besids my self, who receive monethly pay, and they follow him close, and he talks well with them, and is very hartie and well in health.' Mun learns the lute from an Englishman, Theodore Berry; natural philosophy from Monsieur Du Roy, 'very famous in all parts for his science'; and is beginning Greek; he desires drawing-lessons, as he has worked in charcoal, and knows something of painting; his master has taught 'deux Milourds Anglais Spenser et Gerard.'

Jan. 1654.

Myen Herr Schott's bill is a heavy one: 'he is at great charges in maintayning 16 or 17 servants daily, and three sonnes very expert in his art, that do nothing but work in iron and steele, and brace and unbrace crooked limbs. They who have received benefitt by him use to present him with a goode peece of plate, or perhapps a round summe of monie, over and above his accounts; which they do cheerfullie, and he receives thankfullie, for he is noe unreasonablen man. He hath done a notable cure on Mr. Verney.' Mun wishes to be allowed a servant, 'Herr Schott sayes it wold much conduce to the perfytyng of his cure, for hee wold instruct this servant to gird and ungird him, that wheresoever he removes there shall never noe other help him.' Edmund declares he would not otherwise need a servant, '*car je suis soldat ici aux pais bas, dans la compagnie du Colonei Cromwel et me scay servir moi mesme.*'

March 20,
1654.

'For Leyden, I have no fancy to it,' writes Sir Ralph to the Doctor; 'tis too private for a youth of his yeares, that must see company at convenient times and studdy men as well as bookes, or else his learning may make him rather ridiculous then esteemed. A meere schollar is but a woefull

creature, but if you can approve of carrying him to the Hague my good friend Dr Morley will be ready to put him into good and civill company, and advise him from his follies and perhapps that may worke more uppou him, then all that you or I can saye for I have oft observed that young men are apter to receave counsell from strangers, then such as have authority over them.'

Mun manages to dance 'girt in his armour; it was in very good company, and he was requested to it.' Sir Ralph enters kindly into his wish to go into the best society. He again asks anxiously whether Mun smokes, drinks, or swears. Dr. Creighton replies: 'I call him constantly every day at 8 of May 1654. clock & by 9 get him readie to his books, at half eleven his Luteist comes, after which he makes readie for his ordinarie, but all the afternoon it is a great chance if I see him till the next morning at 8; I desired you to chide him for this Loss of tyme & keeping company, I could not accuse him of sins of Commission, No tobacconist, No swearer or drunkard, that I could ever fynde, but for omissions I am displeased. . . . he thrives notablie, god be praised: growes lustie, tall & manly every day: our friend Dr Morley is going this summer to Frankendal with his mistress [the Queen of Bohemia]. . . Herr Schott is paid nobly as f^m a gentleman, & it was well received: & I beleeve he was selldome or nev^r more generously dealt wth.'

The relations between the tutor and his pupil came to an end soon after this. We get an amusing glimpse of Dr. Creighton as Dean of Wells, in 'Pepys' Diary': 'The great March 7, 1662. Scotchman' was preaching at Whitehall before King Charles and the Duke and Duchess of York, his text 'Roll yourself in the dust,' 'his application the most comical that ever I heard in my life . . . saying that it had been better for the poor Cavalier never to have come with the King into England again,' as his enemies were better treated in Newgate than his friends were at Whitehall. By which it would appear that rolling in the dust was not very congenial to the Dean personally; but his fortunes improved. It is cheering to come upon a letter of his, some sixteen years

later, in which there is quite a respectful reference to his slovenly, self-willed pupil, and the harassed tutor himself, now in satin and lawn sleeves, is full of hospitable schemes for entertaining his clergy. Sir Ralph writes from London :
 ‘ Mun . . . The bispp of Bath and Wells was with me, and hee expresses greate kindnesses to you and me ; hee is to be consecrated on Sunday ; hee wants Venison very much, soe I have sent for a Buck for him, which hee takes very kindly ’ ; and this is the friendly letter that the Bishop himself writes, with a Scotchman’s somewhat sarcastic view of the ceremonial of his consecration.

June 16,
1670.

July 20,
1670.

‘ My noble and never to be forgotten freind, Sr Raph Varney, I am now looking homewards, haveing finished the other revolutiones of my Seales both great and small, as intricate to my apprehension, as the mystical seales in St. John’s Apocalypse. And calling to scrutiny what I have to do, or what dutie I have left undone, before I went, I found your great favors both old and new with fresh indelible characters engraven in my mynd : which stirdd me up to write to your selfe and your thrice worthy sonne my quondam charge beyond seas . . . expressing those deare affections I shall ever ow you for all your singular loves from tyme to tyme, even from the worst of tymes to the best, if any yett in these confusions can be called but tolerable goode tymes. Accept then of my most humble and hartie thanks for all your old and new goodnesses, the favor of your venisone, & the honor of your most kynd and welcom company . . . ’

Unhappily prosperity and venison agreed with the good Bishop less well than did the bread and water of adversity, and he lived only two years to enjoy his episcopal honours.

CHAPTER XXXII.

STEWARD, PARSON, AND SQUIRE.

1650-1655.

THE most important personage at Claydon during the ten years of Sir Ralph Verney's absence was William Roades, the steward. He and his father had worked on the estate, man and boy, for more than half a century in positions of trust. From 1610 onwards John Roades' handwriting, as Sir Edmund Verney's bailiff, occurs constantly in tithe receipts made out for the parson, Richard Askew, to sign, and in other documents.

A legacy is left to his wife, in the will made by Sir Edmund in 1622, before starting to join Prince Charles at Madrid: 'I give unto Anne Roades, wife of John Roades my servant, for the care which she hath had in breeding my children when they were young, Tenne poundes.' As the children of John and Anne Roades were about the ages of Sir Edmund's elder children, Anne probably nursed her foster-children with her own, either at the House or in her own home. Their intimacy as children would account for the familiar terms in which Sir Ralph and his brothers and sisters wrote in after life to William Roades, speaking of each other by their Christian names, sending their love to him and to his wife, and signing 'Your affectionate friend'; while their father, in writing to John Roades or his son, had signed simply 'Your master E. V.'

When Sir Edmund made his last will in March 1639, before starting with King Charles for the Scotch war, he left to John Roades, his 'faithful servant and bailiff at Claydon,' an annuity of 5*l*. Roades was by this time a

widower: the burial of 'Anne, wife of John Roades,' is recorded in the Middle Claydon parish register on August 20, 1636. The old man is still styled bailiff in 1639, but since the year 1625 his son's signature had been associated with his in the estate receipts, and the work of steward had gradually devolved on the younger and more capable man. Sir Edmund's detailed and careful directions sent from Scotland about the letting of farms, the feeding up of horses, and the storing of farmyard manure are all to William Roades. There is a letter, written in the last year of Sir Edmund's life, showing his kind care for his old steward.¹ Sir Ralph notes in his calendar of 'Letters from Roades,' May 1, 1644, 'John Roades died on Good Friday last.' That he had made but scant provision for his old age appears from a letter of Besse Heath's, another old servant and annuitant; Will Roades told her 'in collar' that 'hee was not such a foole as his father to toyle all his life and dyc a Beggar.'

April 26,
1650.

William Roades and his family have recently acquired a transatlantic reputation, as the researches of Mr. Henry T. Waters have brought out their connection with the ancestors of George Washington, the Father of the United States.² Mr. Waters has identified the original emigrants, John and Lawrence, as the sons of the Rev. Lawrence Washington, ejected, as a Malignant Royalist, in 1643 from the living of Purleigh in Essex. The will of Andrew Knowling, of Tring, dated January 13, 1650, makes Lawrence Washington, second son of the Rector of Purleigh, his heir, leaving legacies 'to Amphillis Washington, my daughter in lawe (and mother of the said Lawrence) and unto William Roades my sonne in Lawe,' &c., who was left guardian of his heir. Mr. Waters suggested that the widowed mother of William Roades and Amphillis must have married Andrew Knowling, in which case Sir Edmund's old steward John Roades would have been the direct ancestor of George Washington. But

¹ See *ante*, p. 65.

² See the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* for October 1889. Boston, U.S.A.

the Verney MSS. do not bear this out. Anne Roades died some eight years before her husband; Dr. Denton calls Andrew Knowling 'W. R.'s father in law,' which might still mean his stepfather; but Sir Ralph, in a summary of this letter in his calendar, writes: 'W. Roades' wife's father is dead.' Amphyllis, therefore, was not a Roades at all; her maiden name has not been discovered, nor that of Hannah, wife of William Roades, who was probably Knowling's step-daughter.

Jan 28,
1650.

March 4,
1650.

William Roades was a man of good ability, and had raised himself above his father's social position. He rented Fine-more from Sir Ralph, and lived probably at Fine-more Lodge—inhabited in the preceding generation by Uncle Urian Verney and Lettice Giffard. The farm included some of the best land, and the most beautiful position for a house, in Middle Claydon parish. He is described as a 'Gentleman' in Andrew Knowling's will, when his co-trustee, John Dagnall of Tring, is called a yeoman, and he was able to give good marriage portions to his children. When the widow Amphyllis Washington died in 1655, it may well be that their uncle William Roades encouraged the young men to emigrate. He was in possession of full information about the American plantations, as he had managed Tom Verney's business in Virginia and Barbadoes, and had sent out several Claydon men. Both lads prospered in the New World, and had property in land and in tobacco to bequeath at their deaths, with kindly remembrance of the relations left behind in England. Strong Royalists as they were, they must have carried with them, across the Atlantic, stories of Claydon and Sir Edmund Verney; of their uncle Thomas Washington, the page whose death-bed Sir Edmund had defended from the Spanish priests; of their cousin Henry Washington, the Royalist colonel, and 'Governor of the ever loyal city of Worcester,' and whatever else would make a winter's tale for their children by the log-fire, about the mother country and the old home.

When Mary Verney returned to Claydon in 1646 she was fairly satisfied with the condition of the property, and she

commended the steward's efforts to defend his master's goods from the marauding propensities of several near relations. It may be that 'W. R.' was a good servant, but a bad master, and that he was hardly fit for such uncontrolled authority as had latterly devolved on him. His duties at Claydon during the absence of the owner were arduous and complicated. It was he who received the rents and sold the cattle and produce of the land which Sir Ralph farmed himself; it was he who paid the weekly exactions of the Parliament, which by favour he was allowed to send up once a month. He had to furnish the 'portions' to the nine younger members of the family, and after all these payments to save a scanty pittance for the poor master in exile. He had to hold the balance true between his many conflicting duties. Even Tom, though he is always abusing him, never casts a doubt upon his probity, and Henry says to Ralph, 'I confess I thinke a hath done well consideringe the times & his greate payments in yo^r absence.'

Sir Ralph was constantly complaining that 'W. R.'s' letters did not give him sufficiently precise information; but then he was notoriously difficult to satisfy on this score; a tenant 'might have beene burried & risen againe before I had knowne it. W. R. thinks it needless to acquainte me with anythinge.' Sir Ralph wrote from Feb. 1652. Rome 'that Sir R[oger] B[urgoyne] loving hawking in my woods, sayd hee was sorry to see such ill husbandry there, and that 'twas an ill signe, when ye Bayliffe did rise, and the Master Fall.' To check his steward's management he had asked both the family lawyer, 'Uncle John Denton,' and Frank Drake to visit the farms and inspect the accounts at intervals. But as Dr. William Denton was at once the busiest and the most capable man in the family, this work, like much else, was gradually left to him. 'It is an ill cooke cannot licke his owne fingers,' writes the Doctor, 'but lett me once finger your rents and then get me out againe if you can, however it is the best way, for yⁿ had better lett me have them then W^m R.'

The disputes between William Roades and Mr. and Mrs.

Aris, which had been such a trouble to Mary Verney in 1647, blazed up again fiercely at intervals. Sir Ralph's friends at home justified the Rector; but Sir Ralph, who naturally wished to have a monopoly of the abuse of his own steward, gained quite a fresh insight into his merits when the Rector complained of him.

The Rev. John Aris (Arris, Ayris, or Aras), son of 'John Aris of county Gloucester pleb:' was some seven years older than Sir Ralph, and like him had been educated at Magdalen. He matriculated at seventeen, took his degree five years later, in 1628, and was made Vicar of Steeple Claydon; in 1630 he was appointed by Sir Edmund Verney to the rectory of Middle Claydon. Mrs. Aris had doubtless many unrecorded virtues, but fame has preserved little else concerning her than the echo of her shrewish tongue. Claydon owes Mr. Aris a debt of gratitude for the care with which, during the twenty-seven years of his incumbency, he kept the parish registers. He had come to Claydon in the prosperous days of the family; he had since shared in their adversity; he had buried Dame Margaret and Dame Mary, and was in much anxiety on his own account in the evil days that had come upon the Church. The country parsons of Buckinghamshire suffered less than some of their brethren from Puritan persecution. Although Peel, the Vicar of Wycombe, 'was absolutely the first man of all the clergy whom the party began to fall upon,' and William Oakeley of Hillesden shared the imprisonment of the Dentons after the siege; only nine clergymen in the whole county seem to have been dispossessed. In many a quiet parish, where the Rector was beloved, and as far as possible protected, by the landowners and the people, the old services for baptisms, marriages, and burials still went on; where the Prayer-book was not openly used, the prayers were partially repeated from memory; in some Bibles the Psalms were marked in the margin with the days of the month, that the same portions might be read in the old familiar fashion on the same days. But at best a parson like Mr. Aris was at the mercy of any malcontent who chose to

Sept 2nd,
1651.

give information against him, and the tithes were difficult to collect. Dr. Denton tried to keep the peace, but the Rector was not the man to let sleeping dogs lie. Sir Ralph hears at Lyons that Mr. Aris 'sent for W. R. and after a long debate they parted very good friends, & remained soe about 3 months, till a slanderous booke appeared against him; he tells me the Parson saies that after they were made friendes, he endeavoured to call it back againe and being 3 moneths before it appeared sure hee might have donn it; . . . W. R. desires my leave to vindicate himselfe.' 'Betty is now with Parson Aris, who is like to be sequestered; the Parson imputes much of it to W. R. & to the alehouse haunTERS.' Doctor saw Mr. Aris's book by chance at Green's Norton. 'W. R. was not named (though p'happs hinted at) in it, but at the end, he printed a letter which Dr thinks W. R. stormes at. Certainly Aris had wrong, but Dr ever told him hee tooke the wrong way to right himselfe.' Sir Ralph's own verdict upon this ill timed publication is characteristic: 'A Foole could not have made the sermon, nor would a wise man have printed it.'

July 1652.

Sir Ralph writes from Amsterdam: 'I am sorry to see the Parson expresse soe much heate & rancour against W. R. on all occations, but all that he saies in this letter is uppon Hearesay. . . . For though W. R. will sometimes drink too much, yet I beleeeve hee will put out other company then his owne sonne at such a time; I feare some meddling people Blow the Coales between him & the Parson, who perhapps is too apt to credit all reports against a man he loves not.' John Roades the younger was not a man to increase the reputation of the family. 'W. R.'s son, I know, is noe Solomon, nor sober man & he had very little or noe portion with his wife; but his owne Father hath certainley been very bountifull, for W. R. himselfe writ mee word, hee will have at least 400*l*. in his purse which is well for a beginner. . . . If ever I see the Parson (without his wife) I know wee shall bee friends, both before and after we speake of this businesse, but if his Wife bee present, I cannot promise myself that happinesse.'

In August 1652, Sir Ralph hears that the Rector is dangerously ill with 'a scurvy swelling in his neck. I hope and pray for M^r Aris' recovery, & should account his death a greate misfortune, but if he dye, charge W. R. from me, to use his wife with all the respect & kindnesse that can bee, and if shee would not staye in the Parsonage house, nor goe to her owne in the towne, let her bee in what house of mine shee pleases till her owne bee fitted for her, and let her want for nothing that hee can helpe her to of mine. And I pray by entring a caveat or otherwise, take care noe Pragmaticall fellow get the living, & put me to a suite to get him out again.' Dr. Denton writes: 'M^r Aris . . . is past the worst and walks abroad againe, & long may you live togeather, for if he be not very honest, & very much your servant mangre all disputes, I am very much deceaved.' Oct. 1652,

Sir Ralph meanwhile was not easy about W. R.'s management of the estate, and was eager that Dr. Denton should look into it during his summer holiday. 'You need not go to Stow, for want of roome at Illesdon, for you well know Claydon is neare & big enough, and therefore I pray let your summer quarters be there.' 'Deare Raph,' writes Sept. 4,
1652. the Doctor, 'I have beene at Claydon where I staid from Satterday to Thursday, to as little purpose as one would wish besides eatinge and drinking. W. R. had done nothing in order to y^e stating of the accounts but did helceve they were right . . . at last he told me he could not gett them ready till Monday, soe then I thought it vain to stay there in expectation any longer, & therefore have appointed him to bringe them to me hither. He & I are at as great a lose about the accounts, & when he was non plus'd then he would get home & fetch those papers to rectify it (O that he would) & went againe & againe & fetched paper after paper, & ne'er a one to the purpose.' Probably this confusion was due to the habits in which Roades indulged when 'he put out all other company'; at any rate it was past the Doctor's power to clear it up, and he writes in his dry vein when Sir Ralph is returning: 'Be sure you bringe patience for you have a couple of knaves to your Accomptants, that are resolved to

try what mettle you are made of ; if they have not their clowne craft to make you sitt downe by your losse be it right or wronge, they are fooles as well as knaves.' 'I will not quit you,' replied Sir Ralph, 'for any sollicitour in the world.' Will Roades himself was not altogether easy. In an angry moment he had said 'some scornfull things' that he expected to be cashiered on his master's return, and that Nick Aris must succeed him. The sting of this lay in the fact that Nick Aris was the Rector's brother.

On Sir Ralph's return to England at the end of January 1653, after nearly ten years' absence, all his friends and relations were clamorous to see him, and some months elapsed before he was able to settle down at Claydon after a round of visits. Many changes had taken place in the family: Susan and Edmund had both died; the other brothers and sisters wrote to welcome him home after their manner. Tom was detained by very particular business from waiting upon his brother, being in durance vile in the Fleet. Henry, who in middle life played the rôle of a young man as naturally as Sir Ralph played that of an old one, was prevented by an equally characteristic engagement from kissing his brother's hand; 'beeinge att my Lord of Petterborough's [Henry's foible for paying court to great people was well known in the family], My noble Earle tells mee hee has this weeke a progress of pleasure to take, for 10 or 12 dayes, to visset his freindes ; soe that untile that bee over, hee will not dissmis mee on noe pretence whatsoever, though I pleaded with him on this occation modestly for my liberty.' Sir Ralph could wait without undue impatience.

Penelope Denton is 'in a very indigent condition : they say she scarce eats any flesh meat twice in a weeke, not for want of stomach, but of meanes to buy it.' Sir Ralph takes up his old position of adviser and helper in all family troubles : he is soon trying to disentangle the complicated web of John Denton's debts, and tells Pen that their accounts have kept him up till 'neare one a clock' in the morning, and that in earnest he is so weary and sleepy he can scarcely write.

Margaret Elmes longs to be in London or to meet her brother at Claydon, 'the only place as I have hopes to see you in, for nethor I know not how to invite you bereson as most of my frinds receive soe coole a wellcome from those as I wish the had not.'

Mrs. Elmes' housekeeping was carried on under difficulties. Mr. Elmes would leave home suddenly: 'He is now gone a way & hathe not left me one peny what ocasion sum ever I shoulde have for any.' Their latest quarrel was about a maid servant that Mrs. Elmes wished to engage, and to whom he objected; but she could give him a home-thrust in return: 'she seated herself at the lower end of the table, & that before company, saying it was fitt for him that was mistress to sitt at the upper end'; a retort which seems to have mortified her lord and master beyond measure. The 'company' were all on her side, and her husband (like Ahasuerus' courtiers) was left clamouring for a law which should enable every man to bear rule in his own house. 'Cousin Knightly tries to persuade Mr. Elmes to give his wife a fixed allowance for her wardrobe.' 'He pumped att me all the day after for it,' she writes, 'but soe I get it I care not for that . . . I should hardly take under 40*l.* a yere . . . I am seartin never to have a farthing more from him in the way of gift as other men doe to theare wife . . . I am extremely owght of all kinde of linin under thinges and shoulde want gownes as much . . . if I run behind hand att the furst, I shall never get befoare againe.' It must have been a relief to Sir Ralph to turn from Pen's poverty and Peg's quarrels to the domestic happiness of his sister Cary. Though retaining her old name, Lady Gardiner had married John Stewkeley, of Preshaw in Hampshire, a younger son with a comfortable income. He was a widower older than herself, with daughters—Margaret, Anne, and Ursula—who were growing up to womanhood, and a boy William, now aged thirteen. A man of kind heart and good education, he was fond and proud of his wife, and very kind to her delicate little girl Peg Gardiner. Cary proved herself a good-natured stepmother to his children and a capable and genial mistress

of his house. She was much excited by her brother's return; she longed for him to see her husband and her own baby boy John, and wanted to rush up to London, even 'to the prodigy of my helth, which I enjoy lettill of.' As this could not be, she was bent upon having a family gathering at Preshaw; Moll and Betty, who often stayed with her, should meet their brother there. 'I am shur Harry Verney will waight on you highther to,' and 'my husband would be joyed to give you his first salute.'

Cary wishes to include sister Peg in her exuberant hospitality; but as Peg knows that to ask is to be refused, Sir Ralph is entrusted with the negotiation. Mercifully Brother Elmes is just 'about making a voyage into Walles to visit a sister'; he implies that his wife means to go to Preshaw with or without his leave. 'But this I shall say shee carieth herself so bigg to mee, & is of so extream a ruling spiritt, that for my part I shall not endure it any longer than my discretion forceth mee, which will not bee long.' Peg gets her visit, but 'shee will goe to purgitory when she goes home, God helpe her.'

Both Sir Ralph's younger sisters had grown into womanhood since his departure. Mary has no settled home, and is in delicate health. In flowery terms she assures him that the news of his safe return 'hath afoarded . . . me balme to heale me againe. I shalle thiuke everryday a care tell wee meete; I will not hinder you from your more scareous Employments any longer . . . your reall Afeckestionat sister and sarvant, Mary Verney.' To Betty, as to Moll, a letter was an arduous effort. She was scarcely ten years old when her brother left England. He had spent much upon her schooling, but at nineteen she does not seem able to spell her own name. 'Deare Brother, Yesterday came the weall comen nuse to mee that I could desire to heare of, which wos of your safe Arivall to Ingland, & now I have hope for to bee made hapy in knowing on, how I can scars remember, the fas of, yet I doo acknowleg you to have bin a father to mee, & wish it ware in my power to macke retribution but that I am able to doo in nothing but in the extrem

loving of you & yours, in wick I shall never fail in Your affectionate sister E. Vearney.'

Sir Ralph's preparations to set up house again at Claydon give us a very complete picture of his household and house-keeping. He had written to Dr. Denton from Brussels: 'If I must keepe house which I am willing to doe if you advise it, I will keepe but one woeman kind, who must wash my small Linnen (bed & board linnen shall bee put out) and cleane all both house & Vessell which she may doe for I supp not: if she could cooke also I should not bee sorry, and for men I intend to keepe only a Coachman & 2 footmen; or a Vallet de chambre & one footman; or which I like much better a Page & a Footman, but if persons of my condition keepe not pages in England I will not bee singuler, though they are used both heere and in France, & by reason they ride behind the coach, not in it, are better than any Vallet de chambre. If I keepe any other meniall servant, I thinke twill bee a young Cooke, since Besse Heath & her husband have noe children, I shall not scruple at their being married: but imploy them at Claydon if they desire it; but I shall not sue to them, nor can hee bee usefull to me at London (for there wants neither Bakers nor Brewers) but at Claydon, hee may for both & also take care of my stuff, for he knowes it, & how to order it better then his wife, my mother bredd him to it, but I cannot keepe them all y^e yeare, because I am like to bee 3 or 4 months in a yeare at Claydon, & that only by fits & spurts.' His mother's housekeeper, Mrs. Alcock, who married 'an ordinary grazier,' had continued to live at Claydon, and farmed the grass-land round the house.

'Tell me what Family Mr^s Alcock hath in my house, May 1653, what Napkins, Table Cloathes, Sheetes & Pillowbeeres; what store of Beds she can make both for Masters & for Servants, with Blankets & coverlets, and how many of them will have curtains; also what silver spoones and salts she can lend me. I presume there are dishes, pyphates, candlesticks, Basons, Wooden Trenchers, Beere & Wine glasses, greate & small candles, spitts & such like matters of

my owne in the house already, . . . Tell me what scollop dishes there are at Claydon for Frute. . . . and the prices of Beefe, Mouton, Veale, Lambe, Rabbets, Pidgions & Poultry ; Butter & green morning-milke cheeze.'

Sir Ralph's larder is evidently well stocked ; he has also a variety of game in the autumn : his pheasants and partidges are said to be a worthy 'present for my Lord Maier, for hee hath noe such ware in his shoppes' in London. The garden is to 'bee planted with ordinary usefull herbes, if there is noe Borrage nor Burnet, plant or set it quickly.' Luce Sheppard is buying French shrubs and vegetables. 'I pray forget not to bring the seeds. . . . some five or six souls (sous) worth of Cardon d'Espagne y^e best and ffairest comes from Tours, also some good Mellon & seeds of Roman Lettuce, Lettuce Frizé, Chou de Millan, Chou frizé, bestow about 30 or 40 sols on all these seeds and such others as you think fit beside what you pay for the seeds of the Philloray I also desire any sorts of eateable grapes out of the best & choycest gardens ; . . . in my old garden there was woont to bee good Eateing grapes of severall sorts.'

He continues his directions to Roades : 'Tell me if the Locks & Glasse windowes are in order, if not glaze the Parlour & my Studdy by it, the Dining Roome & Best Chamber : tell me if the Water pipes are in order, & let the cisterne be clenged. Repaire the chicken house next the slaughter house quickly as you & I agreed, that I may not bee troubled with Workmen when I come. Tell me if the grate is upp in the Kitchin Chimney, & what Wood, Sea-coales, & Charcoales, you have ready for me . . . Tell me if there bee not white sillibub pots in the house If M^{rs} Alcock cannot brew Ale, a brewer must, 6 Barrells for my table and the Hall, strong, will not be stale enough in time, I doe it for any of my Tenants that may come to me, tis cheaper then Wine and will please them better . . . make them welcome, & being they have nothing but Bread, Cheeze & Drinke it must be good & in plenty too, or else, they may justly blame both you & mee.'

For his own table he sends down 'in a Browne Hamper

2 dozen of stone Bottles with White Wine. They are all sealed with Black Wax, & by one Seale, I pray observe if the Seales are whole, & set them into sand in the Wine cellar by themselves, & sometimes cast Water (that's well salted) upon the sand.' Six stone bottles 'of Vergus, Vinaigre, and Inke,' follow later in 'a greate hamper,' to be put in the cellar but not in sand. 'I hope you have few chickens, & other poultry to bee a little fleshed, before I come, or else they will not bee to bee eaten at present.' Itodes is also to get 'some young Turkies, though they are noe bigger then a chicking of 6 pence, or 8 pence price.'

Sir Ralph sends down a new cook, but is afraid that 'Idleness may spoyle him,' so the steward is to exhort him to use his leisure in learning to read and write, and in baking French bread in the great 'Brasse Baking Pans.' The cook greatly prefers the making of hare pies to literary pursuits; 'hee is wilde to get a gunn' to shoot the hares: but Sir Ralph will not have the hares shot, nor his game disturbed in May. He is anxious to know how the cook 'carries himselfe,' and whether Mrs. Alcock approves of him. 'I shall suffer noe man that's either debauch or unruly in my house, nor doe I hier any servant that takes tobacco, for it not only stinks upp my house, but is an ill example to the rest of my Family.' Michel or Michaud Durand, 'the very little foot-boy,' who was with Sir Ralph in Brussels, has gone to Blois, to learn how to make pastry and good French fancy bread, and is to come to Claydon when he is perfected. Sir Ralph desires Rhodes to 'tast the Vinaigre, & if it bee not very good let me presently know it, & I will send downe some. . . . Questionlesse there is White Wheat enough about Wendover & Missenden, any Baker will tell you & if there be, write to any discrete honest man there of your acquaintance to buy you half a quarter of the Best & Whitest to make Bread; when any cartes come upp from Claydon, they will carry home for a small matter, & that will bee cheaper then to send a Horse & man purposely.'

Sir Ralph, alive to the importance of a good water supply, thanks Mr. Abell of East Claydon for his courtesy in letting

him bring down water from a spring which has supplied Claydon House ever since. 'Perhapps M^r Sergeant at Brill can take the height of it with a Water Lovell, & my owne [spring] too, & I hope they goe high enough to come into the Leaden Cesterne in the Water House, as it now stands, without any forcing of them upp. Tast & smell the Water of that Spring & of my owne too that's neare it, & try if either of them will beare soape; but doe it privately.' Coals were selling in London at 27s. a chaldron, having just fallen from 33s. After this they had to be carted down to Claydon. Sir Ralph is assured that he may 'buy Wood cheaper than coales at these rates, considering the carriages.' The Claydon woods supplied many villages with fuel. In the autumn of 1650, when there had been no sale at Claydon for two years, the poor were up in arms: all the hedges were pulled down, and they would 'not be kept out': 'The country wants wood, for all their old stock is gone.' So Sir Ralph authorises a great clearing in Muxwell wood, 'where there is at least three yeares sale.' The firewood yields from 4*l*. to 10*l*. an acre, according to the season—generally 7*l*. to 8*l*.

There is an interesting list of eleven cottages in the 'towne of Middle Claydon,' showing how many 'cows commoning belonges to each,' making a total of twenty-one cows kept by eleven families. But now, after two centuries and a half of progress, not a single cottager in Middle Claydon keeps a cow, and the common has entirely disappeared. The rents of the cottages appear to have been 16s., 18s. 4*l*., and 30s. a year. William Tomkins writes to the steward about an apprentice from Claydon:—'Mr. Rhodes, my love remembered unto you, Sir, I would desire you to be mindfull of me consarning a prentise. I shall not take one under sixtine or twentie poundes, I shall indevor to teach him my two profetions which I use. Thus leaveing you to the Allmightie I remaine your Frend to command.' Unhappily we do not know what Tomkins' 'two profetions' were. The fee sounds high, as Evelyn the next year bound his 'laquay Tho: Headley, to a carpenter, giving with him five

July 28,
1653.

pounds and new clothing: he thrived very well & became rich.'

Sir Ralph warmly thanks Lady Gawdy 'for her extraordinary charity to my man Mathew; certainly though her Balsome did him much good, her care added more to his cure.' Mathew retained a grateful recollection of Lady Gawdy's nursing, and with Sir Ralph's approval he entered her service later as butler, to her great comfort. We hear of him once more in 1662, when Doll Leeke writes from Crowes-hall: 'Your servant Mathew goes with my lord pellou into Iarland, my lady Desinond pressed Sir Charls very much, for he beleves it a preferment, and upon that account perted with him.'

There are many evidences of Sir Ralph's personal knowledge of the farmers and their families, and of his kindly interest in them and in the labourers. If his labour bill has to be diminished he can estimate exactly the qualities of 'the wain-men'; 'Tis better to put off young Harding, for hee hath the least skill, and Gutteredg, for hee is most peremptory and Dogged.' Gutteredge was, however, taken on again at the White House, and is planting mulberry trees at East Claydon in 1664.

A tenant farmer had pleaded for more time to pay his rent, but when he was heavily in arrears he disappeared one summer morning with his stock. 'Collins cannot carry away 68 sheepe & 12 cowes soe as not to be found,' wrote Sir Ralph to his steward; 'for if he went away on Satterday he durst not drive them on Sunday; ask Mr. Busby if I may not send hue & cry after him & the cattle, for since he played the knave soe grossly, when hee was soe well used, make him an example; . . . never trust any tenant soe much hereafter; but let them all know, if they cleare not all arrears before the next halfe yeares day that shall follow, you will not trust them with theire cattle, but sell them at the best rates you can, for forbearing of Tenants, you see, tempts them to bee knaves.'

Sir Ralph writes to one of his own creditors, Richard Curtis: 'You shall have interest to a farthing, but when I call

June 18,
1653.

Nov. 19,
1655.

1654.

for Rent, my Tenants protest they cann make nothing either of their cheeze or cattle, & I know 'tis too true, & corne is also att so low a Rate, that I know not what wee shall doe.' 'Land goes off in most parts of England, soe neare London for 20 or at least for 19 yeares purchase,' writes Sir Ralph concerning his own estate, 'yet I would be content to take 18 years purchase for it, rather then pay interest still.'

March
1651.

Jan. 1652.

Besides the small farmers and the labourers in regular work owning cows, there were a number of destitute people who had been much on Sir Ralph's mind in his long lonely evenings abroad. At Christmas time 1648 he wrote: 'I am told that Claydon is poorer than ever, & that the poor want work'; and again, to Roades: 'About 2 yeaeres agon you writ me word, there was non at Claydon that asked almes at any man's Dore, either within the Towne or without. Tell me if there is any that doe it now and who they are; . . . also name how many receive weekly or monthly assistance from the Towne, & what the Towne allowes them.' He wrote a careful memorandum on 'How to relieve Claydon Poore'; those 'which receive noe Almes, are perhapps,' he says, 'fitter objects of charity than the Beggars.' He desires Roades to confer with their richer neighbours about the apportionment of labour, 'so that all men that can work, want work, and are without work, shall be given work according to theire abilities.' He helps the young people to start in life by paying apprentice fees or by finding them places; he is willing to pay for the board of a poor little village child whom no one will own; 'but then security must be taken to keepe it like a Christian.' He will give immediate help to the most destitute; 6*d.* a week to 'old Newman . . . & to Andrewes & his wife 3*d.* a weeke a peece, from mee towards their present subsistence,' '200 laggots' are to be divided between 'John Lea, Widow Croton, Nan Heath, and Judye May'; but he longs to see something done for the aged poor more permanent and more business-like than these uncertain doles. He desires Roades to think over a scheme which he might start at 'some considerable charge'

if the village would keep it going by a common rate of which he would bear his full share. His own plan would now be called a co-operative cow club; the cows are to be bought by subscription, and to remain the property of the club (the club at first being Sir Ralph), the men to pay for the cow-run and to have the produce of the cow, taking more cows as they can afford it. He would introduce a good breed of cows at Claydon, as those belonging to the poor were 'old and naught, & dry many months in the yeare.' But this scheme proved to be full of difficulties: there were local jealousies, and the cows themselves did not rise to the occasion; 'a cow that was worth 5*l.* at May day was not worth 50*s.* at Michaelmas.'

Two pious tasks filled Sir Ralph's mind on returning to his old home—to build almshouses for the poor and to perpetuate the memory of his dead.

The Washingtons in the days of their prosperity at Sulgrave had set apart some cottages for the use of 'honest, aged, or impotent persons . . . without paying any rent therefor, other than one red rose at the feast of St. John Baptist yearly.' Sir Ralph exacted no such poetic rent, but he took care that the old men and women should have good gardens, and they were to be stocked with fruit trees from the 'Setts' in his own orchard.

The monument had been in Sir Ralph's thoughts ever since his wife's death: even before her body could reach Claydon he had written to Dr. Denton about it. 'Measure Aug. 25,
1650. the Breadth of y^e chancell & marke the place where y^e Body lies, and at your returne describe it to a Toombemaker & send me 2 or 3 draughts on paper drawne Black & White, or in Colours as it will bee, that I may see which Toombe I like best; & because my deare Mother & halfe my children are there, They and if you thinke fit my selfe, & 2 Boyes (not forgetting poore Pegg that went to Heaven from Hence) may bee added also, & if my Father could well bee brought in it would bee very well. As for y^e price, if the designe please me, wee shall not easily differ for a little money. I desire to consecrate it to posterity by all

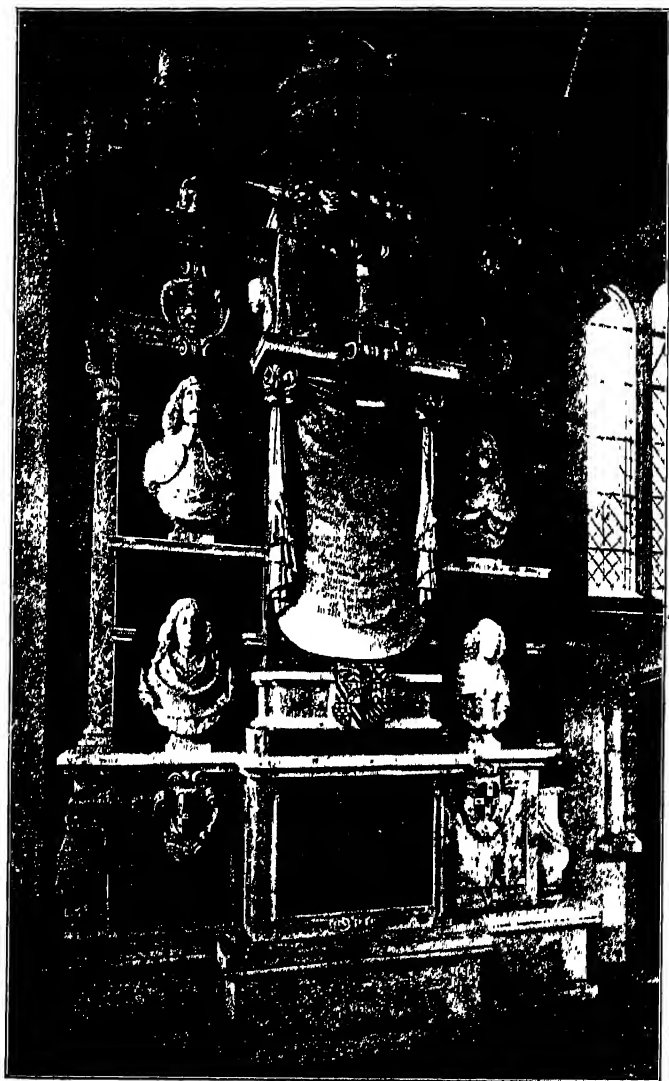
Sept. 23,
1651.

immaginable waies & meanes within my power.' Monsieur Duval is lodging 'in one of the best stonecutters' houses in London,' and he superintends the work under Dr. Denton. 'Now for a Tombe, y^e chancell being little,' Sir Ralph writes, 'I was thinking to make an Arch of Touch [black granite] or Black Marble; within the whole Arch shall bee black, & her statue in White Marble in a Winding sheet with her hands lift upp set uppon an Urne or Pedestall uppon which or on y^e edge of y^e Arch may bee what Armes or Inscriptions shall bee thought fit. I was thinking to make a double Arch and in it to set upp her statue, & only leave a Pedestall for mine, for my sonn to set upp, if hee thinke fit, but I doubt this would bee thought vanity, being there is non for my Father & Mother, but if it please god to give me life & my estate, I will set up a tombe for them. I know Mr. Write about Charing crosse did make one in this manner, with a greate Childe of White Marble between the 2 stones of Touch, & all armes & Inscriptions & the Drapery of the 2 marble statues very well & artificially cut; hee had 80*l.* for it, but then he carried it 80 or 100 miles, & set it upp there at his charge; others have had it donn for 50*l.* but perhaps not so well cut. . . . See Dr Dunns & the other Tombes at Paul's or Westminster or elsewhere before you speake with the Workmen.'

It is appalling to think what the monument might have been if Dean Donne's tomb in St. Paul's had been taken as a model. Before his death, in 1631, Donne dressed himself in his graveclothes, and sat for his own effigy, which looked like a great white owl, with folded wings and a very reverend expression, perched upon a funeral urn.

March 8,
1652.

Sketches come to Sir Ralph from London and are revised at Rome; others are sent from Rome, where the busts were probably executed. 'The man that should draw the designe of the Tombe is so imployed by the Pope's Officers about Shewes for Easter' that Sir Ralph's order is laid aside; the decorative part of the work is to have no 'figures of Men, Birds or beasts.' 'Black & Coloured marble cost 10*s.* the



MONUMENT ERECTED BY SIR RALPH VERNEY IN MIDDLE CLAYDON CHURCH

foot, white marble costs 16s. & alabaster 7s. the foot,' brought in Dutch ships.

The monument, after all the time and thought bestowed on it, proved worthy of Sir Ralph's good taste and of the memories it was destined to enshrine. 'My hopes of seeing you at the D^{tois} were dasht,' Sir Roger complains. 'Its your pleasure to live still amongst the tombes, and to keep company with ghosts. I pray be no longer intomb'd, least I prove interr'd before you come.' 'Cousen Smith, Lady Haile and cousen Hobart meet Henry at Claydon, to see the house and tombe.' But Sir Ralph is absent and 'noe ^{1655.} dinner do they gett.' Tom 'cannot but begg the freedome to take a view of that well beseceming monument or tomb you ^{Feb 2, 1657.} were pleased to bestow for the memoreye of yours and my deceased freinds, ffor the which you have for ever eternized your name & deserved to be chronocled in the book of fame, soe sayeth Sir, Your most cordiall brother & very humble servant.'

In August 1653 Sir Ralph is planning a gathering at Claydon; Sister Gardiner and Mr. Stewkeley are hospitably pressed. 'Hee and all his house shall be most welcome heather, though not so finely fed as I was lately at Preshaw.' He will send two horses to meet them. 'I wish they could cary trebble, that your coach might bee lesse charged; however I hope you will order matters soe as not to leave a Hoofe behinde. The Honest Farmourer will guard the House sufficiently doe not doubt it. In earnest, the more you bring, the sooner you come, & the longer you stay, the greater will bee the obligation to, Deare Sister, your most affectionate Brother & Servant.'

Thomas Elmes replies to Sir Ralph's invitation: 'Your sister & myself do live so unlovingly together, that I have no heart to come to her freindes; neither do I like to have my freindes come to mee, least they should take notice of her unkindnesse to mee.'

Edward Fust, of Hill in Gloucestershire, and his wife Bridget Denton, were also invited. They were a very attached couple, and their youngest daughter, Peg, was one

of Sir Ralph's special friends. Dr. Denton and his wife Kate were expected, her daughter Mrs. Gape and the good apothecary. Captain and Mrs. Sherard were asked, but were occupied with building. Sir Roger Burgoyne came, and other old friends.

The unlettered cook did admirably, and the guests were loud in their praise of the 'good feeding,' but he had some 'gamesome trickes' which displeased the sober Claydon household. When Sir Ralph went into lodgings in town in December he lent him to Captain Sherard; a boon Aunt Sherard received with mixed feelings. It was delightful to think that her husband would be so well fed, but she feared that the *chef* might prove too lavish in his expenditure, and 'overbold with the maides,' which would 'be a great hart grieve to me.' Fish-pies were amongst the works of art produced by Sir Ralph's cook, and sent to friends in London. Dr. Denton did not remember that ever he tasted any such, except eel and lamprey. Sir Ralph had them made of carp: they were not at first successful; one arrived 'tainted.' 'Mine,' wrote Dr. Denton, 'was very good, but soe full of small bones, that none of us durst touch it, only to taste it.' Susan Abercromby, Jaconiah's widow, now very poor, was at supper with them, and upon her praising it, the Doctor hastily presented his sister with the remains of the pie to take home with her. The pigeon pies were said to be little better; 'the bones of the legs were broken.' 'Moll will indite you,' he wrote to Sir Ralph, 'for contriving to choake her'; but Sir Ralph's cook persevered, and the Doctor sends a message from Nancy on the receipt of another basket from Claydon: 'Madcap is soe well as to tell you & brags much of it, that she hath jeer'd you into good pidgeon pies. These were soe good that there is not one left of them already.'

Nov. 1655.

It must have been sad for Sir Ralph to receive Mary's luggage, which kept arriving from Blois; there were trunks to be unpacked marked 'M. V.' in brass nails, containing odds and ends of women's goods: 'fringes, cordes of stooles, cushions and such like,' and the guitar that Sir Ralph had so

loved to hear her play. The boxes had gone through many perilous adventures, owing to 'the pyrates and other sea robbers' in the Channel, and 'the porters and such starvling fellowes that steal at the Custom houses, where there are as many flechers as searchers.' The delays were infinite in getting them from London to Claydon. Sir Ralph's agent in town had arranged with the carrier to take them, but though the goods were brought two hours before the time appointed, the waggon was full, and they had to be warehoused again.

The carrier might well have been alarmed at the bulk and number of the packages: besides the 'long elme cases of linnan,' the 'square Box of Drawers,' the 'great iron bounde Trunkes,' the 'yalowe haire sumpter trunkes,' the 'presse for napkings,' the 'Cabanet in a case,' there were 'great Bundels' past telling of bedding, carpots and hangings, 'hampers of glasses, potts, and trumpony,' and a 'Bundel' of the unfortunate picture frames that had already been so knocked about the world. The Vandykes themselves were still waiting, rolled up at Rouen, for a safe means of sending them home. Inside the 'glasses and trumpony' Luce Sheppard packed 'two pound of bisquet, a dozine of oringes, and summe liquerish.' The luggage sent by carrier often came to grief by the way. Dr. Denton was reproached for despatching a box to Claydon without sufficient care. 'The Dr,' he replies, 'is out of tune, maugre jeers & flouts, for he did not only tye the black box with its owne stronge leather, but alsoe coarded it with a packthread, as porters use to coard a trunke.'

Sir Ralph is planting his park and orchard. 'Cherry Feb. 10, stocks will be two shillings by the hundred, gathered out of 1654. the woods: but any better and bigger ones from the gardens will be from three pens to twelpe pens a pece. The holly setts price are eighteen pens the hundred . . . the holly beris are not cald for as yet.' John Hanbury, of Preston Court, sends him grafts of good apples for cider. '30 or 40 couple of Does [rabbits] are to be turned out to feed in the orchard, and the grass must be mown if it be too sour and long for

them.' Cousin Gee is inquiring about lime trees in Flanders, where 'they doe abound almost everywhere, especially about Lisle, where they are to bee had of what size you please for a very small matter,' and Mr. Wakefield offers to import for him 800 abeles, which he says will be much better than 'the Lindeboomes.' A few of the old abeles still flourish at Claydon.

A nursery of young trees is started 'in the Kodling Knoll in the Garden,' whose seeds are to be carefully saved 'and writt upon severally.' While Sir Ralph is in London these young trees are much on his mind. All the 'Ewes' and ashes are to be staked. He will have some alders set in the wet places of the woods for a trial. In July the new trees are to be constantly watered, 'especially the fire trees & Lime trees in the Garden, and those in the whitening yard, and lett a Load of water be carryed to the Wallnutt trees in Barley yard.' Michaud, who has no scope for his confectionery talents while Sir Ralph is absent, may help to carry water.

In a country without stone, brickmaking is one of the
 Feb. 1658. most important outdoor industries at Claydon. The brick-
 yard is to be trenched and the brickmakers will come as
 soon as the weather permits; there is a list of the tools,
 April 1658. wheelbarrow, and moulds 'delivered to the Brickmen.' Sir
 Ralph is getting 'Brik pavements' from a neighbouring
 village; they are 9 inches square, and he inquires whether if
 Aug. 1655. he 'take soe great a quantity as 12 or 15 hundred together
 . . . six oxen would not well draw 500 at a load, for they
 are not near twice so heavy as brick, and any ordinary cart
 will bring 5 or six hundred of brick at a load, now the wayes
 1656. are good.' The brickmaker is paid six shillings a thousand
 for making and burning bricks, one shilling a quarter for
 burning lime, and five shillings a hundred for making and
 burning 'pavements.' Stone-gatherers should be set to
 work on some of the fields. Sir Ralph 'would expect to get
 some fields measured and plotted for a penny the acre, if the
 ditches were perfected.'

There was also a thorny question at Claydon concerning

the limits of the glebe, and of an exchange, which it passed the wit of man to bring to a conclusion. In this dilemma Mrs. Aris held out a private olive branch, and Sir Ralph at her suggestion wrote to the Rev. Edward Butterfield, Rector of Preston-Bissett: 'This morning M^{rs} Aris was more kinde to mee then ever she was in her life; and declares her greate aversenesse to any contest between her husband and my selfe, and when wee had discoursed at Large about the businesse, shee (in a very friendly way) propounded that you might come over, & use your good endeavours to end the controversie, well knowing that both her husband, and I, have a very greate confidence in your friendshipp to us both. But Mr Aris not knowing anything of this, you must carry it soe, as if you came only to visit him, . . . wee shall desire you to come too morrow if you can, and somewhat early too, that wee be not straitened in point of time. God give a good success to your undertaking.' Mr. Butterfield would think his pains well bestowed if he might 'prove instrumentall to settle an everlasting peace' between Sir Ralph and Parson Aris.

Oct. 2,
1651.

The treaty of 'everlasting peace' was not to be drawn up in a day, though Mr. Butterfield came early; and three weeks later he writes to Sir Ralph in some discouragement: 'On Wednesday (though I had designed that day for other occasions) I shall with God's leave wait on you, and contribute my best endeavours, to finish the agreement betwixt your selfe and Mr Aris. Sir you well know it is for the most part a very thankles office, this way of mediation. I should be very unwilling to loose my friends for my paines. I shall be careful not to deserve it, but if it be my fate I must beare it.' So well and warily, however, did Mr. Butterfield walk upon egg-shells that when, in three short years, the militant Rector with his rights and his wrongs was buried in Middle Claydon Churchyard, his widow bestowed her hand, and Sir Ralph the living, upon this admirable mediator.

While Sir Ralph was imprisoned for many months in 1655, Parson and Stewart girded at each other again with all their wonted zeal in his absence; the Parson led the attack.

With a shaky hand, and in very pale ink, he wrote to Sir Ralph a folio sheet of provocations offered him by the Steward, and sins of omission such as were once happily defined by a child as 'the sins a man ought to have committed but didn't.' Roades, however, had managed, in the Parson's estimation, to commit them all. In the head and front of his offending was the question of some omitted hurdles at Roger Deeley's gate. Sir Ralph had sent minute and special directions about the fencing in of Roger Deeley's Lane. The hurdles, Roades affirmed, were troublesome to fix, the 'Land being so unequal with ridges and furrows, that if the rails were even at the Topp any sheepe will creepe under them in the Furrowes.' Eight carpenters were to be set to work to make posts and rails 'to divide betwixt me and the Parson.'

Roades had given his master to understand that the hurdles were actually in their places; but the summer was far spent, and the Parson's beans were still exposed to the encroachments of horned cattle. Sir Ralph reproached his steward with considerable asperity, writing every word in large letters, when he approached Roger Deeley's gate, and discounting all possible excuses beforehand. 'I know you will say . . . that the hurt of your Legg, the building of your House, and the time of Harvest kept you longer from thence then you intended, this may bee some kinde of a lame excuse. . . . I will not condemn you unheard, tis not my custome . . . I cannot yet foresee how you can possibly excuse it . . . and I shall be noe lesse sorry then ashamed to have the world see my commands soe slighted by my own servant.' Altogether Roades had a lively time of it. Everybody at Claydon heard of Sir Ralph's displeasure, and the housekeeper was told that, as there could not be much to do indoors, she had better go up to the lane and report upon the hurdles. The scolding given to the Steward had conciliated the Parson; but as Will Roades' brother Ralph, the Parish Clerk, farmed land close to the glebe, fresh occasions of offence could not fail to arise. In such topsy-turvy times it was possible that the Clerk might

dismiss the Rector; at least so it seemed to poor harassed Mr. Aris; and if the principles of the new democracy permitted the Clerk's hogs to eat up the Rector's corn, it was high time indeed for the beneficed clergy to depart to a better world.

'Sir,' wrote Mr. Aris to Sir Ralph, 'the tenant that ^{Sept. 15, 1655.} excused his hoggs for coming into my corne . . . was Raph Roades, he speake to me myself and threatened to shoote my dog, or knock him on the head because he Luggd his hoggs. And though I suffered the wronge, yet the gentleman uppon some parle betweene him and me, turned me away, and forsooth would be no longer clearke, but presently delivered up his office to the churchwarden. And if he be not belyed he threatened me as well as my dog. I told his brother what mischief he might bring.' The hogs had got through the neglected gaps in Roger Deeley's Lane. 'He seemed to me to condemne Raph, but the Lane was not heeded, as if he had rather it should make quarrels still, then he would be at the least trouble to prevent them . . . so prayinge for your . . . saife returne thither (where there is need enough of your presence, and your true freindes indeede long to see you), I humbly take my leave & shall remain, Sir, your Servant to be commanded, John Aris.

'Sir, if you would rather ditch me in then rayle, because the rayles they say are most chargeable tis indifferent to me, so there be a dead hedge presently made and a ditch throwne up this winter. But I hope to see you suddenly with us, and then I know you will order all things as they should bee.' He adds a second still more placable postscript, having just heard that 'there are now 5 carpenters about the posts and rayles, and that one made up Deeley's Lane on Satterday in the afternoon.'

So the Steward had at last carried out the Squire's peremptory commands, the Parson was contented, and peace was restored to the parish for a season.

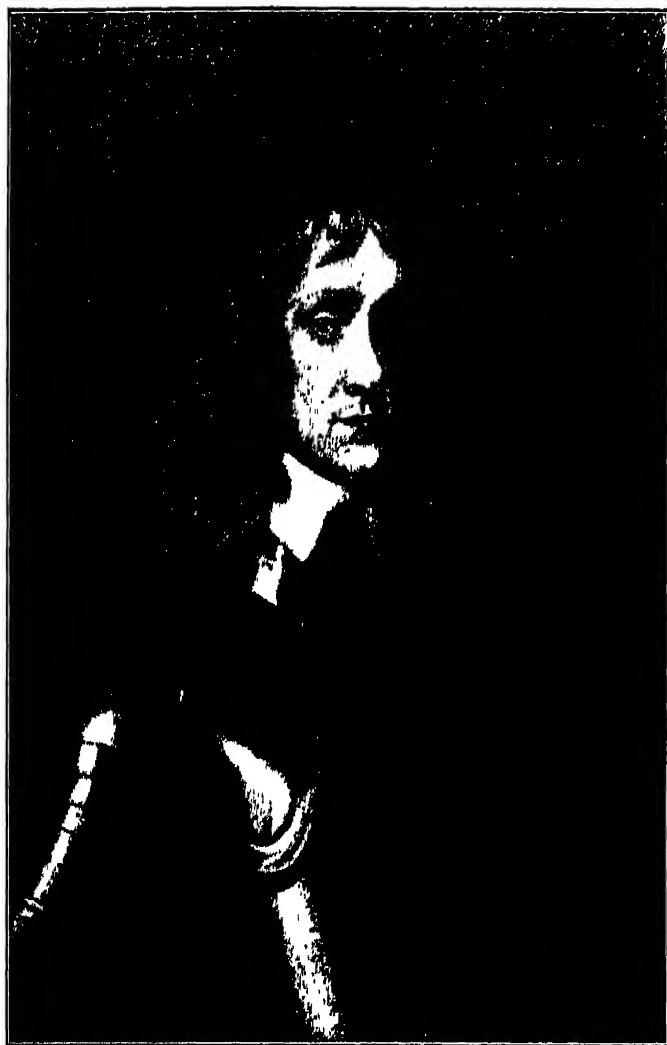
CHAPTER XXXIII.

TOM, THE IMPORTUNATE DEBTOR.

1649-1663.

‘To imitate historians in putting prefaces to their books, I conceive I need not, for I am confident you are so very sensible of my want of clothing. Sir my last request to you is for a slight stuff sute & coat against Whitsontide, which may stand you in 50s., the which I will repay you by 3s. weekly till you be reimbursed. In former times my own word, would have passed for such a sum, but now they require securitie of mee, becaus I live in soe cloudy a condition. God put it into your hart once to releive my nakedness & you shall find a most oblidging brother of Sir, your humble servant Thomas Verney.’

So runs one of the frequent begging letters addressed by Tom to his long-suffering brother. ‘Faithful Abraham,’ and ‘righteous Job,’ St. James and St. John, are all pressed into the service to teach Sir Ralph the duty of almsgiving; when this well-spring of charity threatens to run dry, other members of the family are put under contribution. ‘I have sent to my hard-harted Aunt, only for two bottles of her table-beare . . . it is my greatest refreshment, soe it be fresh & brisk’; Uncle Doctor is encouraged to send Tom those expensive luxuries ‘a few oranges or lemons’ if he is indisposed, or at the least ‘some cooleing barley broth.’ This is a list of his modest requests when meditating a West Indian journey: ‘First for a provision for my soul—Doctor Taylour his holy liveing & holy dyeing both in one volume. 2^{ly} the Practise of Piety to refresh my memery. The Turkish Historye, the reading whereof, I take some delight in.



CAPTAIN THOMAS VERNEY

Now for my body.' A list follows of provisions of all kinds, Westphalian hams, Cheshire cheeses, Zante oil, beef suet, everything to be 'of the very best quality.' He will not ask for 'burnt clarett or brandy,' though he requires it, 'for I must not, Sir, overcharge you, for you have been highly civill to me'!

Liar and braggart as he was, Tom's personal courage had never been doubted, and if his ill success in Virginia and 'the Barbadoes' had shown his lack of aptitude as a colonist, he might still have earned his bread honourably as a soldier; but 'having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue.'

His younger brother Henry, with his cynical lack of high aims and worthy occupation, at least behaved like a gentleman in the ordinary affairs of life, prided himself upon the good society he kept, and continued to be Penelope's favourite brother till death. But in that large family of brothers and sisters Tom had not one chum. He alienated the love of his first wife and disgracefully neglected the second. From being idle and extravagant, he had become, at the time we have now reached, actually dishonourable and dishonest, and the doors of the old home were at length shut against him. If he visited Claydon at all, it was by private appointment with the steward, for Roundes as long as he lived could only behave kindly to the son of his old master. The informer and forger might not claim the familiar intercourse of a brother, though Ralph still continued to supply his material needs.

Plausible and quick-witted, with an evergreen hopefulness that would have been admirable had it led to better things; born of a Puritan family in an anxious and conscientious age, Tom stands out as a man absolutely without either care or scruple. While the ship of the state is labouring in stormy waters, and men are struggling in agony to bring her into port, Tom follows her course with the keen and hungry eye of a sea-gull, indifferent to her fate, but ready to swoop down upon any scraps thrown overboard.

His share of the family correspondence lays us, however,

under a deep debt of gratitude; he depicts social conditions to which the admirable Sir Ralph must ever have been a stranger. We learn something of the shifts and tricks to which a debtor in the seventeenth century was driven, and are forced to admire the cultivated and ingenious letters the wretch can write in most unsavoury surroundings, hunted down by creditors and racked with fever and ague. To give the scapegrace his due, he was not generally addicted to coarse self-indulgence.

The habits of fashionable society after the Restoration made Tom's nephews and cousins old men at fifty; and it speaks much for his sobriety of life that he continued hale and hearty to his ninety-fourth year, surviving all his generation. Rogue as he is, his very audacity compels us to attend to him, and (as has been said of the cuckoo) 'the world has always a fondness for interesting scamps.'

In the fateful year 1649 Tom Verney crosses the path of John Lilburne, and the fierce blaze of the Leveller's invective sheds light upon passages in Tom's life but dimly known to us through the Verney letters. Lilburne was at this time in prison, and, according to his own account, Haslerigg and Bradshaw were employing 'one Thomas Verney, a quondam Cavalier . . . to plot and contrive the taking away of his life' by getting him to commit himself in writing.

Tom wrote to Lilburne in the Tower expressing his sympathy and assuring him that he could bring 3,000 or 4,000 men into the field to back him, and that it would not be difficult to gain over the City of Oxford to his cause.

Such magnificent offers from a stranger excited Lilburne's suspicions. He was asked, if ink and paper were kept from him, and his speech were free, to instruct some friend to treat with Tom by word of mouth on his behalf; or to give him a list of his adherents in Bucks. Tom pretended to have heard from a friend of Lilburne's, who was to meet him at the George Inn, Aylesbury, 'one Mister William Parkins,' a creation of Tom's fertile brain. Lilburne consented to see Tom at last, taking with him two of his fellow

prisoners as witnesses, who feared lest Tom might try 'to stab or poyson him in a cup of wine, or the like.' They did not know their man. Tom bragged a good deal of his own services to the King's party 'five years ago,' and 'that his Father was slain at Edgehill, being the King's Standard-Bearer,' and protested that he abhorred the very idea of being a 'Derby House agent.' Lilburne called him 'a juggling knave' and 'a Judasly villain,' and repeated some of the choice stories he had heard about him 'from a citizen of London, a Colonel, & a Gentleman Cavalier.' 'At which,' Lilburne says, 'the gentleman (with the impudentest face and undaunted countenance that I have seen) denied all.' . . . 'O pure Rogue!'

Lilburne did his very best to pay Tom out; he desired that the matter should be brought to 'the Committee of State,' and sent copies of the letters to 'Master Hunt of Whitehall,' which if they had expressed Tom's genuine sentiments were certainly sufficient to hang him.

There were obscure reports on the other hand that Tom ^{Aug. 18, 1649.} had tried to sell himself to Charles II., and had been obliged very hastily to leave the Hague. The gossip-loving newspaper 'Mercurius Eleuticus' has a wild story that, having stolen a horse in France, Tom took refuge in a monastery, 'when for some small time, he dissembled himself a zealous Catholique, & as the sonne to so honourable a gentleman as Sir Edmond Varney, had great respect & favour shown him untill hee found an opportunitie to steale away sundry priests' vestments, pictures, & other things consecrated to a holy use, & of great value, wherewith he fled to Calais, & there sacrilegiously sold them.'

He was so cordially disliked that the marriages and births carefully registered in each branch of the family have not been recorded in his case, except for a scornful entry that he had many wives and left no children. It is therefore difficult to disentangle his domestic history. In 1644 we heard of him with an affectionate wife, Joyce (family unknown), a woman of good fortune and position; perhaps her parents, who were Royalists, had left England in the troubles, for Tom airily

alludes to 'a wife that I have at Mallaga.' Sir Ralph was afraid of meeting her abroad : 'Tell me how Tom is, and in what Towne in Italy his Wife is, for I neither desire to visit her nor to bee visited by her. I doe not beeleeve shee is dead, tell me if he spake of it, before hee went a wooing to another'; but Tom declared that he had had too much trouble with one wife to undertake a second.

MAY 24,
1652.

He wrote without any embarrassment to Will Roades that he had counterfeited his signature for a sum of '20*l.* or 30*l.*' to get rid of a creditor, and there were rumours of a more serious forgery. Tom was released from the Fleet under the Act for the Relief of Poor Prisoners, having to swear that he was not possessed of more than 5*l.*; but he found his way back again in a few months' time.

JAN. 31,
1653.

On Sir Ralph's return he received from Tom a ceremonious letter of welcome : 'The nois of your landing afforded mee more joy and comfort then a wife can receive att the report of her deare husband his arriveall from the Indies, after seven yeares voyage, etc. etc. . . . My greatest stock is now come to one poore groat . . . and how I am able to subsist 5 months with one groat . . . I appeal to you and to all rationeall and judicious persons.'

JAN. 3,
1653.

Tom was deeply in debt to the landlady of his lodgings, and when she took to calling on Sir Ralph, he was sensible that she 'was an eyesore to him.' The woman 'had resented his conduct very ill,' he writes piteously to Dr. Denton. 'Feareing that I should play the knave with her, shee (not withstanding my then weakness) betrayed me into the prison of the fleet, and I was brought thither by 8 of the clock the last night; which I feare will be a meanes to putt mee into a second relapse; for I was forced to walk in the yard all night, haveing neither fire, money, but one poore groat, nor roome to shelter mee in from the coldness and rawness of the night.' 'The grave of the Living' the Fleet was called, 'where they are shut up from the World, the Worms that gnaw upon them, their own Thoughts, the Jaylor and their Creditors.' Tom, little fastidious as he was, could not face the horrors of the common

wards nor pay those 'great rates the Gaoler exacts' for better quarters.

Sir Ralph lost no time in getting him a private room (the lowest price being about 8s. a week, besides extra fees) wretched as it was at the best, but his 'enlargement' was more difficult to compass. Tom writes again: 'My confinement is soe very chargeable, my chamber soe extreame cold, my habitt soe thinn, that I did by letter make my desires knowne. . . . Good brother, here is now some cold snowie weather approaching, which incites mee to putt on warmer cloths. I must confess I am moved for a coat of shagg'd bayes, but you are suspitious my cloak would be then pawned. Hunger will break through strong walls, and I shall be soe plaine with you, as to let you know that rather then I should starve, cloak, coat, and all that I had should goe to relieve nature: But thanks be to God your charitie and brotherly affection hath soe amply appeared to mee that I have not knowne what hath belonged to want since teusday last.'

Feb. 7,
1653.

'You are that fountaine,' he wrote again two days later, 'from whence all my joy, delight, and comfort comes, and long may you live to see, what you principally aime att, my amendment. He goeth farr that never turnes. Wors livers then my self have seen their errors and have returned home like the prodigall: why may not I? God hath endued mee with a reasoneable understanding; and I question not a reall conversion, since I have soe courteous, soe kind, and so tender a harted brother to help mee up before I am quite downe. . . . I begg the continueance of a weekly supply durence my restraint. Eighteene pence a day, which amounts in the week to 10s. 6d., is as low as any one that is borne a gentleman can possibly live att, let my wants be supplied by noon, that I may have a dinner as well as others.'

Tom was released before dinner time, but then immediately rearrested. 'I have been now ever since Sunday at night in prison, and have not come within a payer of sheets or a bed, or have had a fire or any meat to eat, but what I bought with my groat; and if this be not hard

Feb. 11,
1653.

measure for one that hath been lately desperately sick, let the world judge . . . and if I perish I perish.'

Feb. 14,
1653.

Sir Ralph is exerting himself, and Tom writes again: 'Deare Brother,—Your pious (though unmerited) charitye ought to be registred in the chronicle of fame as a memoriall to future ages. Be confident, I shall not be sparing in exerciseing the office of an herauld to proclaime your worth. You may conceive mee a flatterer, but in truth I am not; for I am an eniyme to all such sort of persons. . . . One thing more, I beseech you, take notice of: which is, that I must this night and soe for the future, lodge without sheets, if I pay them not two shillings: for I have layen in my foul ones a fortnight, and would, if I could possibly prevayle with the turnekey, who receives money for his sheets, keep them longer, but that civilitye I am denyed, as I am all others where now I am: therefore I must pay 2s. for a cleane payre; which I begg of you to send mee, and yet I cannot but blush for my mentioneing a thing soe inconsiderable, and of soe small a moment.'

The fees for beds were exorbitant; even those who provided their own 'paid fees for the privilege of lying upon them, without some one or more of their fellow-prisoners being told off to share the bed with them.'¹

March 8,
1653.

'Deare Brother,' he writes on his release, 'I conceive it, both in point of honour and gratitude, to be huge gentleman-like to returne you a letter of thanks for what civill favours I received from you dureing my restraint, which, in truth, were many. I shall celebrate them particularly in my soul, whereby to be able to acknowledge them in the least presenting serviceable occasion, and live allwayes with this will, never to dye beholding to you, but yet my most truly esteemed Brother your most acknowledged thankfull servant, Tho: Verney.'

The old Fleet Prison, with which he was so familiar, perished in the Fire of London. Sir Ralph mentions the new Fleet Prison in 1688, when Lord Monson the regicide

¹ *The Economy of the Fleete*, edited by Aug. Jessopp, D.D. Camden Society, 1879. Introduction, p. 88.

was confined there. As Lord Monson owned a deer park, and was in a position to ask high prices for his deer, it is difficult to understand what he was doing among the debtors; but a man who was in prison both under Cromwell and under Charles II. must have had a perfect genius for getting into trouble. Sir Ralph found him 'somewhat shy, and careless of parting with his Deere, though he confessed clearly they cost him money, and yeilded him neither profit, nor pleasure,' and finally Lord Monson asked him to do his best for a poor prisoner. But to return to Tom, he begs again in his 'huge gentlemanlike' manner, five days after his release, for means to leave the country. 'If I may be furnished with tenn shillings I will goe downe to Wapping and there take a lodging in a place where I am not knowne, and soe I can, by accompanieing my self with seamen, have dayly and hourelly intelligence what shippes are bound either westward or southward, and learne both their burden and streight, and what convoy, and allso when they will be ready and soe communicate unto your knowledge the truth of all things.'

He promised if he reached Malaga to send Sir Ralph 'the knowledge of my wife's and my greeting, together with the scituation of the place, there manner of government, and with what else that I shall esteeme worthy your reading.' But he has no special preferences, and next desires 'to be transported in a shipp that is bound for the Barbados. March 15,
1656.
 . . . Courteous Brother, That Island, and all the Indies over, doth wholly subsist by merchandizing: and that person that aimes to live in creditt and repute in those parts must be under the notion of a merchant or factor, planter, or overseer of a plantation, and he that lives otherwise, is of little or noe esteeme. . . . I could (soe it might not occasion an offence) prescribe you a safe way how to send mee thither, like a gentleman, like your brother, and allso to equall my former height of liveing there: but you may perhapps find out a way (unknowne to mee) how I may subsist and have a being like a gentleman till you can heare I am safely arrived there or noe.'

How Tom was to have 'a being like a gentleman' was a problem which all the family had tried in vain to solve; but Sir Ralph sent Robert Lloyd to make arrangements for his departure, and if he would only betake himself 'anywhere, anywhere out of the world,' Sir Ralph promised him an increase of 10*l.* a year on his annuity, to be paid when he got there, and to cease if he ever came home again! The bribe had an agreeable sound, but by the end of the month Tom had abandoned his Barbadoes project, and craves his brother's consent 'for spending this summer in a States man of warr. Noe damned bayliff, nor hellish sergeant can or dares disturb my abode there. A place secure enough and tenn pound will handsomely sett me upp, and I can begone out of the cryes of those cittye hell hounds, the next tide of ebb I have my money: ffor the place, where the states ffriggotts doe ride att anker, affords plenty of commodities that are for that my occasion. The desperateness of the service nor the justness of the quarrell, doth not att all discourage mee; for it is more honour to dye in the feild then in a stinking dark dungeon. My father and my brother shall be my patterne, if you say Amen to it. ffor I doe further declare unto you, that I shall not leave their service, unless extreamitye of sickness or desperate wounds, as the loss of any perticuler limb or the like, may call mee from it.' After this outburst of heroics Tom condescends to discuss the other plan; soldier or trader—it is all alike to him. He is still willing to go to the West Indies if Sir Ralph will provide him with labourers and 'such commodities to be delivered to mee there, as should be vendible in the countrey.' Household utensils were apt to run short in the families of the English planters. From a schedule of the goods and chattels sold by Joseph Hawtayne in Barbadoes in 1643 we learn that he possessed 'one jugge, one table-cloth, six napkins, one frying-pan, eleven musketts & twoe Bibles.'

Tom had exchanged the confinement of the Fleet for a wretched lodging 'in Lambeth Marsh,' where he was 'allmost choaked up for want of aire,' but out of which he

scarcely ventured to stir, except on Sundays, when debtors could not be arrested. 'Deare Brother, Solitariness is the ^{April 4,} sly enimye that doth allmost seperate a man from well ^{1658.} doinge: but your aptness in complyeing with mee in my desires hath soe infinitely oblidged mee, that Seariously I want language to express my self to the full. A heart, and a most true and faithful one I have, wholly devoted to your service. . . . I must owne you rather for a father then a brother. . . . I request you then to give mee as much holland of 3s. 6d. an ell, as will make mee a shirt or two; for in truth I have but one . . . & that hath been a fortnight on my back allready. I am as well able to endure the lying on a bed of thornes, as the life I now lead; ffor what with unwholesome smells . . . and most noysome stinks, which clothworkers use about their cloth, as allso being drowned with melancholy, my life to mee is a burthen.'

'I doe know of a garment that would last mee to eternity, and it is to be purchased for less then forty shillings; which is a grave; and *that* I cannot have neither as yet; in time I shall, then I shall have a requiem sung unto my soul, and purchase a releas from this my miserable life to enjoy one more glorious; soe I thought to have made an end of this my sad complaint, but before I soe doe I make it my request to you, if I have either by writeing, or by word of mouth abused you, or spoken evilly of you (which to my knowledge I never yet did) as to bury it in the grave of oblivion, and to weigh those words of mine as proceeding wholly from a person drunk with passion, and overwhelmed with miseries.'

Sir Ralph sends him shirts, but refuses to advance money, or to discuss his claims to enter upon a 'glorious' life in a more appreciative world than here below. Tom writes again in his lofty style, being 'much nettled' by his brother's coolness: 'Mr. Lloyd, I am partly satisfied as ^{May 24,} being clothed by Sir Ra: but the reason that he gives for ^{1658.} his not advancing the money I understand not; but am wonderfull desirous to know. . . . To fancye I still take ill courses, though I have for this half yearr in prison and out of prison lived hermitt like . . . my brother must delude

children with such fancies. I understand him in that. I am too old to be caught. And when I have made my proposealls Sir Ra : will take an occasion then, to flye off, as he did when I condescended to goe to the barbados ' !

May 27,
1653.

Three days later he suddenly determines to resume the life of a soldier. ' I am to be listed to morrow in Collonell Ingolsby's regiment, and to trayle a pike in his one company : but am to march with them on Munday or teusday next to Dover, where the hollanders have made many shott, which putt the inhabitants into a fright, and have sent for ayd. Now this regiment haveing been in Dover formerly there in garrison, it is ordered by the Generall and Councell of officers to march forthwith thither againe : therefore, Sir, I make it my request to you that . . . with all convenient speed you will send after mee, a cloth sute and cloak, a gray dutch felt, a paire of gray wolsted stockings, a paire of shoes, a paire of strong bucks lether gloves, and 3 bands, 3 paire of petitt cuffs, and 3 hand kerchers ; and to furnish mee with a slite sword, and black lether belt (all not exceeding 6*l.* 10*s.*) sometime this day. . . . I shall then most willingly list my self as aforesayed to morrow early in the morneing in Saint Georg his fields. One thing I had allmost forgott, which is, perewiggs are not to be had in Dover, therefore I must crave to have that with mee : and if you pleas to speak to Mr. Lloyd to goe to the three Perewiggs, and 3 Crownes, in the Strand by Suffolk hous, and have but my name mentioned to the master of the hous, he being a frenchman, and knoweth the bigness of my head and what borders I usuually weare, he will by tuesday morneing next make mee one for ten shillings that shall doe mee service. . . . I beseech you hinder mee not.'

Another letter comes speedily on the heels of the former. ' I am to advertise you that I entered my self into the States service on Satturday last. As for the coat you bestowed on mee, the heat of the weather commanded mee to lay it by against winter, but that my doublett injoynd mee to the contrary by reason it covers the patches of my doublett and britches ; I cannot possibly march in it without much

hazarding my health: And if I stay behind without leave, black will be my dayes.'

In September Tom acquaints his brother with his 'sudden & unexpected departure from England into Scotland.' He requires 7*l*. for 'the recruiteing myself with such needfull conveniences as the coldness and barrenness of that beggerly countrey together with my necessities doth require. Your refusall will caus mee to forsake my colours and in soe doeing I may be liable to a councill of warr, and even be punishable . . . thus leaveing the premises and my long and teadious marching a foot into Scotland unto your brotherly care of mee I take leave.'

Sir Ralph, taught by long experience to be sceptical, takes advice. Mr. Gape, upon inquiry, 'is confident there is no such matter.' Tom, all unconscious that his brother was so well informed, waxed eloquent in describing this imaginary march into Scotland, the length of the way, the hardships of that 'frozen, barren country,' and his own prospective sufferings in the public service. In November he is still in London, shivering and wanting 'the god of the world, money . . . my necessities would require a supply of warme cloths: But how to gaine them, that is the question. Time was, when I have equallized my friends in curtesies, and though I have hitherto been clouded, and am brought to a very low ebb, yet their may come a floud of prosperitye, which may inable mee to express my self gratefull. All of us knowes our beginnings, but God knowes our endings. I referer the application to your one sweet self.'

'Had I not accidentally scene you in Lincolnes inn ^{Dec. 10,} feildes yesterday, you being at that instant in discours with ^{1653.} a gentleman in a gray cloth sute and cloak, of a reddish colloured haire; I had not troubled you with this letter, but beeing in hopes of your seeing and not seeing mee, by reason of the gentleman that was with you I have rather presumed once more, to put you in mind of my former request.' Tom proposes to wait upon his brother 'on Sunday morning next.' 'I have made choice of that day, because it is a day of

security for mee to walk in, otherwise I am very sencible that it is an unseasonable day to visitt in.' Tom was nothing if not punctiliously devout.

Jan. 16,
1654.

On his next brotherly 'visitt' to beg for money, Tom not finding Sir Ralph at home, it 'proved some rubb in his designe.' He writes from 'Mr. Hogg his hous in pide bull alley near the faulcon inn in Southwark': 'I am bound for the sea, and that in a stately shipp of the states, which is called the Lyon, one Lambert Cap^m of her, shee rideing now att anchor in the Hope, and within three weeks shee will sett sayle towards the fleet. I shall not deny, but I may loos a legg or an arme or both, if I escape with my life. . . . Amidst the rest of my books I shall carry to sea, S^r Walter Rawley's history is the only one I want, it being a book I extreamely fancye, and would be an excellent companion for mee att sea, but it is of to high a price for mee to buy.' He considerably advises Sir Ralph to grant his requests at once, or 'I shall be putt to an unnecessary expense in commeing to you to argue it out with you.' The next letter was written on board the Lyon 'in Lee Rode.' 'My over hast hath proved somewhat to my prejudice; for in the handing of my small parcell of goods out of the Lee hoy aboard the Lyon, one of my bundls broke, and I lost 3 new shoes.' Would any shoes but Tom's have fallen overboard? 'I have sent up my fourth to my ensigne to have that matched, or one forthwith made to it, and to send mee downe one new payre more besides my patterne; the which 3 shoes I begg of you to pay for mee, and if I live to make a returne, I shall see you repayed.' As an alternative he asks for money for his 'transportation to the Venetian Warrs, whereby I might appeare in some sort equall to my fortune tho' not my birth.'

Feb. 9,
1654.

Feb. 20,
1654.

He writes 'of the division of our fleet, some for the coast of Ireland, some northward, some for the straites, and the remaining part to plye to and againe upon our English channell, to free the sea of holland free-booters.' Tom had not been two months on board this 'stately shipp of the states,' and does not seem to have lost any particular limb,

when he is back in town, and again plaguing his brother for money to send him abroad.

'To what part of the world am I most inclineable to re-
 paire too? Give me lceve (I beseech you) to returne you
 this modest reply. Seeriously (for the present) I doe not
 well know. But be it either for Ireland, Scotland, flauders,
 Swethland, or Denmark, I shall give you notice where I am,
 becaus of havcing my annuitie returned mee, as it shall grow
 due. Moreover mee thinks you make an objection, and say,
 How doe I intend to imploy myselfe when I am abroad?
 Not in idleness I doe assure you: for experience tellethe mee
 that that is the mother of mischief. A souldier I intend to
 be till better imployment proffer itself.' His desire to be
 gone was quickened by hearing that 'a citty sergeant' had
 been promised 40s. to arrest him, and was looking for his
 lodgings. 'A misunderstanding between the king and his
 subjects,' he writes magnificently to his brother, 'hath been
 the ruine of himself and his three kingdomes: and I feare
 it will prove mine, unless you take in good part my letters,
 which hitherto have savoured of nothing but a reall and
 cordiall affection. I once more implore your aid that I may
 secure my self from the jawes of the devouring lions.' In
 April Tom shipped himself 'in the Hanniball, it being a
 merchantman is since cleared with divers others in the fleet,
 soe in my expence of ten pounds I gained six and thirty
 shillings, a hopefull voyage.'

March 26,
1654.

In June his experiences were further varied, as the
 Government took notice of his eccentricities: 'Upon Munday
 about noone I was accused of high treason and carried to
 Whitehall, where I continued till yesterday being then
 fetched off upon bayle: but am forced to give my dayly
 attendance till I am examined which I am promised by
 Lieutenant Collonell Worsley shall be sometime this weeke
 You will assuredly heare of mee nere the council
 chamber or else find mee walkeing in the inner court in
 Whitehall about 10 of the clocke.' Nothing was proved
 against him, and he was soon discharged as an offender
 beneath the majesty of the Tower.

June 6,
1654.

June 15,
1654.

He had exhausted the patience of Sir Ralph's intermediary. 'This day being Thursday,' he writes, 'I sent to Mr Robert Lloyd for my weekly allowance, whose brother being in the shopp would neither receive my letter, nor permitt my messenger to speak with him, he being, att that instant in the hous: but foamed forth some scurrilous language injoyneing my messenger to tell mee that I must send no more thither; for nothing that came from mee would be there received. . . . God in his mercy forgive them,' says this injured martyr, 'and cleans their harts from envy, hatred, and malice.' The Lloyds refused to deal with him, even Roades had been 'disrespective.' 'There is no rulinge of Beares,' said Dr. Denton. 'It is an easy thing for Momus,' Tom writes, 'to pick quarrels in another man's tale, to make his own the better. I supplicate to non for there good word: it doth not sute with my nature soe to doe. It is best knowne to God how I have desired an amicable compliance with you all, and it hath much greived mee of the ill retaliation I have received from you all, perhapps I may exempt yourself. . . . I have made choice of one, who hath found my dealings soe just, will, if you pleas, take the trouble on him.' This admirable man was a Mr. Henry Palmer, whom Tom discovered later to be 'an adventurer.' He was most obliging in receiving Tom's allowance, but a little slack in transmitting it.

Genteel poverty in the seventeenth century had an additional burden to bear in that it required a wig. 'Good Brother,' writes Tom in October, 'I shall begg but one poore favour more . . . and that is for a border to keep mee warme which will cost mee tenn shillings. This morneing it was my ill happ to walk abroad earlier then ordinary and being a great foggy mist, I received some little prejudice by it in my head, my haire being very thin.'

March
1655.

'I shall acquaint you with a motion that was made mee, which I would gladly undertake. . . . It is to ride in the Protector his one troop, not in his life guard, but in his regiment of hors, which is now quartered in the west. . . . I conceive it farr better and somewhat more beneficiall to

ride then to march on foot.' He begs Sir Ralph to advance 20*l.*, which would put him into this employment, to be repaid by 4*l.* quarterly. 'I am as well able to build Paul's as to rais it by credit or else how.'

He has had 'a tertian ague and a scaver (which through God's blessing and my uncle's care) I am recovered of; but to whose account the phisick will be put unto, I know not. . . . I had only a vomitt, glisten, a cordiall and breathed a vane.'¹ He is ambitious of adding a lawyer's bill to the doctor's. 'My father-in-law entred into a penall bond of six hundred pounds for the payment of 300*l.* in 6 months after his decease to Sr John Maynard (a trustee for me and my wife). . . . My wife hath fooled mee of the bond, which drives mee to a chancery sute to prove it.' The penniless debtor has engaged Sir Ralph's old friend John Fountaine as 'my counsel.' He writes importantly how he has to take out 'two severall commissions for Hampshire and Southamptonsshire for the gayneing the testimony of my sister Gardiner and my brother and sister Elmes,' who were witnesses to the bond, 'which when that is done and attested by some gentlemen in the countrey, I shall gayne an order for the executors to pay mee what they and I shall agree upon.' Sir Ralph promptly declines to be responsible for the chancery suit, and Tom is loud in his indignation. 'Brother . . . you have not merited a brother's esteeme. Sir, povertye may be blamed, but never shamed,' &c. He contrasts Sir Ralph's hardness with the generosity of his ensign, 'though he be noe brother nor any wayes allied more then by a few yeares acquaintstance; yet pale-faced envye, mixt with hatred and mallice hath done there best indeavour to sett us att variance; seariously they have encountered with this my unmoveable freind, singly, and allso alltogether, and yet they could not alter him in his esteeme of mee. I could cordially wish I could say the like of you. . . . I shall attempt to see you,' though he

April 22,
1655.

May 22,
1655.

May 23,
1655.

¹ An old quasi-colloquial term for blood letting, which 'probably expresses the sense of relief when a much distended vein is tapped.'

is good enough to add it is 'not my desire to receive curtesye in a compulsive way.'

July 16,
1655.

When Ralph himself is in trouble Tom improves the occasion. 'Sir, divisions in families are as much in effect as in a state or republique. They are the fore runners of mischiefs. God direct his judgements from us. Perhapps you may imagine I rejoyce att your misfortune, and att your restraint. Intruth I doe not.' Tom is in his foul-smelling lodgings in Lambeth Marsh, and again very sick;

Jan. 1656.

'Dr. could neither come nor send, the river being well stored with ice.' He has a furious quarrel with Mr. Gape 'in my sister Mary's chamber'; 'shee was not wanteing in her indeavours to palliate and pacify us, which when she saw could not be done she wept.' 'My wings are clipt, my troubles are many, yet (glory be to God) I indifferently wage through them.' Tom has accidentally met with Mr. Hall,

March
1656.

July 1656.

'who was once deputy marshal of the Marshalsea now Gaolor of the White Lion prison.' The financial matters connected with Sir Edmund's management of the Marshalsea had been long under discussion between his successor, Sir Edward Sydenham, and Sir Ralph; the Deputy Marshal was still unsatisfied, and asked to submit his claims to arbitration, in which case Tom would 'gladly be an instrument of good.' Sir Ralph next hears of him as having been mixed up in a robbery. Tom indignantly asserts that his brother's credulity 'doth not only feed the fancies of depraveing sycophants, but prompts mee to call your judgement and brotherly love into question. . . . Wee both had one father and mother, why should therefore our affections be soe alienated one from the other? An estate, perhapps, you may say; or that I have merited this strangeness from you by takeing base and unwarrantable courses, and in this my soe doing the name and family is dishonoured by it. Admitt, Sir, this should be your reply. I hope you will not doe like the Mayor of Rye, when a malefactor was called before him, he sayd, lett us first hang him, then trye his caus. . . . You have beleaved severall things, as hath much intrencht upon my honour, fame and good name; as hath

Aug. 9,
1656.

been as false as God is true . . . but I have a beleif that I shall as soone wash the blackamore white, as to alter your unmoved hatred towards mee.'

Tom entered into mining speculations that autumn; in our day he would have written admirable prospectuses and have floated bubble companies; he was, however, disturbed in his 'Mineral imployments to answer the malice of Sir Tho: Thinn at our assizes.' 'Sir, when Sir Thomas Thinn understood the sence of the Bench, and that I was acquitted, paying my fees, he cunningly arrested mee in the face of the court, charging mee with an action of 500*l*. . . . It will not be long till he hath *lex talionis*, and soe we shall make it a cross action. Some tell mee he hath putt my name in print and that it is in *Mercurius Polliticus*. Two pence will tell mee the truth of that, therefore I shall say noe further . . . in relation to malicious Thinn.'

He is detained in Lambeth Marsh (and no wonder) by fever and ague; the kind Royalist physician Dr. Hinton is attending him for love of his ffather: every other day the ague 'gives mee a visitt butt att uncertaine houres, which April 27, 1657. gives mee some hopes of its leaving mee. This day (being my wvell day) invites mee to putt penn to paper to impart unto your knowledge that my partners in the mines (hearing of my sickness) doe deal very unhandsonely by mee, by indeavouring . . . to work mee quite out. . . .'

He begs Sir Ralph to go surety for him. 'A mine to you is of noe value becaus you understand it not, but I doe, and doe esteeme my interest in this my undertakeing to be worth to mee, before six months be fully expired, 600*l*. by the yeare. If I doe (beyond all your expectations) rais myself a fortune of 4,000*l*. or 5,000*l*., when I dye I cannot carry it with mee, somebody will injoy it, you or yours may have it; strainger things then this hath come to pass. The designe I am upon promises a greater fortune then I speake of.' Sir Ralph drafts a reply for his servant to write to him; it is much to the point. 'Mr. Verney, my Master desires you to May 1, 1657. excuse him for passing his word for money, hee is resolved against it and soe hee hath long declared, therefore you need

not trouble your selfe any more in this kinde ; this being all I have in command, I rest, your servant Rob^t Kibble.'

May 12,
1657.

Soon after this Tom turns up at 'Bottle Claydon,' but after a talk with Roades is not encouraged to go on to the House. 'Were the world in generall as unkind unto mee as a brother, I might well then complaine (like Job) miserable comforters are you all.' Sir Ralph had authorised the steward to pay him 5*l.*, and Tom extracted an extra 2*l.* from Roades' good nature. 'If I dye before quarter day my hors which I left in one of your closes is worth his adventure.'

June 15,
1657.

'My mines' continue to be most flourishing on paper, and in the future, but for the moment ready money is urgently required. Tom is at 'Sladburne in Yorkshire in the Forrest of Bowland.' 'My minerall discoveries' have come to perfection, 'which will augment my small fortune betweene foure and five hundred pounds the year,' but a paltry sum is needed at once to 'continue my repute with my workmen. . . . I hope you will not envye the prosperity of my fortunes but rather smile at my fortunate success. I am confident there be some that doth indeavour to make strife betweene you and I : but as for my part I doe here declare myself to be an enemy of all pik-thanks¹ and insinuating people, and I take it as noe small mercy in these giddy and unstable times, that God hath raised mee a brother that hath afforded mee such a comfortable subsistence.'

Jan. 1658.

The poor wife who has long dropped out of the correspondence reappears in July 1657: she has returned from Malaga in great want, and Tom desires Roades to send her 2*l.* They are evidently not together. Tom has been in Leicestershire 'to the mine in Sir Scamour Shirley's ground,' but found all the ore disposed of: 'Where money is wanteing unreasonable accompts cannot be well questioned.' 'I doe still follow my minerall discoveries at Sladbourne . . . but leave the success to God.' Colonel Charles White, of 'Bearall neare Nott^m,' writes to Sir Ralph for 10*l.* he had advanced to Tom; his friend 'Mr. James Hallam will attend him with

¹ 'By smiling pick-thanks and base newsmongers.'—*Henry IV.*

the acquittance.' Sir Ralph is obliged to reply that Tom had long ago desired him to pay that money to another creditor.

During the interregnum following Richard Cromwell's fall Tom runs into 'a labyrinth of troubles.' 'Where to abide Aug. 1659. in these times of danger I know not,' he writes from East Claydon, 'ffor in my travell through Lancashire to Darbyshire, I was taken by the Militia troop, & carried to Darby for a spye, & had not I been known in the towne, I should have fared much wors then I did; yet I was detained three dayes before I could be discharged; it was some more then ordinary charge to mee, I dare not lodge in any towne or village more then a night, least the like danger may befall mee. My present thoughts are for Sweden, there to abide till these dismall clouds are a little blowne over. Sir, I did promise (upon your granting my last request) not to trouble you till after michaelmass was past, in truth I . . . little thought of these grand mutations. God in his superabounding mercy, divert his wrath from falling on us.'

He writes again to Kibble from East Claydon: 'I ought Nov. 15, 1659. to have taken shipping att Hastings in Sussex, but by reason Sir George Booth was att that time taken, they were soe strickt that I could not find out a meanes to goe; neither doe I well know where to take up my abideing place. Times are soe dangerous . . . Charity waxeth cold everywhere. . . . Yours to his power,' etc. Kibble sends 40s. from his master, and Tom for once seems grateful. 'By your meanes and brotherly affection I am inabled to travel somewhat further. God restore your charity an hundredfold . . . sweet brother yours most affectionately to serve you.'

The next spring: 'Mr. Palmer (my dayly tormentor) is in hott persuit after mee with his bayliff barking currs, that I am forced to be vigilant least I should be by him insnared . . . my intentions are both for cheapness & privacy to journey into North Wales into a place called Anglesey some 250 miles . . . could you but spare mee one of your cast suits & my younger brother a low prized horse.' And so the forlorn wretch disappears from view till the 'grand mutations' are over, and it is profitable once more to proclaim one's self a Cavalier.

Dec. 1,
1662.

July 1,
1660.

Nov. 24,
1662.

Feb. 12,
1663.

After the Restoration he has thoughts of accompanying the Earl of Windsor to Jamaica, but lacks a sufficient outfit; and in 1662 we hear something of his domestic history in a letter of Dr. Denton's to Sir Ralph. 'I hope Tom will not be such a clowne as offer to come to you without his new spouse. I can assure you he & she were very fine & at a play on tuesday last; . . . he had with her 4 or 500*l.* in money; 50*l.* a yeare besides some expectacions after the death of frendes. There's your man Sir.' Tom was not driven to so desperate a step without cause. He complains: 'I doe not love to trumpett out the great paines & care I have (for 4 yeares last past) taken to rais a lively hood, and if it hath not pleased God to prosper my indeavours, my ingenuity is not to be blamed. It is a Scripture saying, that Paul doth plant and Apollo water, but it is God that doth give the increase. . . . Sir the ant reads mee a lecture of providence & industrie which I have indeavoured to imitate; the bee allso of witt and sagacity; for this little foul when shee goeth abroad a forrageing, and is (perhaps) surprised with windy weather before shee returns back againe, takes up some gravell in her fangs to ballance her little body, then shee hoyseth sayle and steeres her cours homewards more steadily.' With such pious and scientific motives Tom seems to have taken up a wife in his fangs as ballast, and now with a more or less happy shot at the long Welsh name he announces that he is 'upon purchasing a leas of the King for all his majestie's wastelands, lying in the parish of Llan vñ=angell croythin, in the county of Cardigan in South Wales: but I cannot gett Sir Charles Herbord to make a report of the King his reference on my petition till he hath received a certificate from Mr. John Vaughan, who is his majestie's steward in those parts; which hath occasioned my takeing a journey into Wales to make Mr Vaughan my friend.' He proposes to visit Sister Mary by the way.

Tom refers to his second wife as 'a mayden gentlewoman, who is the eldest daughter of the Kendals of Smithsby in Darbyshire, of an ancient family, though of noe very great estate, yet her portion would be worth 1200*l.* if it were well

secured.' He is plunging into a lawsuit to obtain it, for which Sir Ralph is to provide the money. 'I would not have my wife to be sencible of my wants becaus I have hitherto possest her with the contrary.'

Lest Tom's correspondence should leave in our minds any doubt of his merits we have a testimonial which he gave himself on 'St. Thomas Day, 1661: Sir,—Want is the greatest provoker to mischeif, experience telleth mee the same, I could wish the occasion were taken away, and you would soone heare of an alteration in mee, *ffor I am not natureally inclined to evill.*'

'Tom is an exceedingly picturesque character [writes Mr. A. W. Blacknall, from North Carolina, U.S.A.]; I see that Nature had not yet broken the mould in which Falstaff was run.'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DOCTOR WILLIAM DENTON.

1605-1658.

WILLIAM DENTON was the youngest son of Sir Thomas Denton and Susan Temple of Stowe, where he was born April 14, 1605.

Children of Sir Thomas Denton and Susan Temple.

Margaret *b.* 1594 = Sir Edmund Verney

Alexander *b.* 1596 = Mary Hampden

Susan = Jaconiah Abercrombie

John *b.* 1598

Paul *b.* 1599 *d.* s.p.

Thomas *b.* 1600 *d.* s.p.

George

William *b.* 1605 = (3rd) Catherine Fuller

Bridget *b.* 1607 = Sir Edward Fust

Elizabeth *b.* 1610 = Thomas Isham

Anne *b.* 1611 *d.* unm.

Margaret *b.* 1612 = (1st) J. Pulteney, (2nd) W. Eure, (3rd) Phil. Sherard.

Like the family in Miss Yonge's 'Daisy Chain,' the Dentons begin and end with a Margaret.

The Dentons and Temples had so many children in successive generations that there was scarcely a county family in Bucks that did not call them cousins. Dr. Denton had thus a good deal of social influence to start with, which he soon increased by his personal charm and professional ability.



DR. WILLIAM DENTON

Educated, like Sir Ralph, at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, he studied medicine under a famous physician, Henry Ashworth, and took his doctor's degree at the age of twenty-nine. Two years later, in 1636, he was appointed Court Physician to Charles I., and attended him in the Scotch war. After the destruction of 'sweet Hillesden' House, and the death of his eldest brother in the Tower, the Doctor and his lawyer brother John did their best for Sir Alexander's orphan children. The eldest son, John, met with a soldier's death in the Civil War; Elizabeth married Francis Drake in 1637 at Middle Claydon; Margaret married Colonel Smith just before her father's death in 1644; Sophia died in childhood; but Edmund, Alexander, Thomas, George, and their sisters, Susanna, Anne, Arabella, Mary, and Dorothy, remained to be provided for out of the wreck of the family fortunes.

Certain relations, who would do nothing themselves, advised Sir Ralph and Mary to adopt the girls; but with his own five young sisters to care for, Mary declined the suggestion with some warmth. So the charge of the little flock fell chiefly upon Dr. Denton. He thought of sending Edmund abroad to complete his education, but the youth provided for himself more agreeably by an early marriage with an heiress, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Richard Rogers, Kt., of Eastwood, co. Gloucester; Alexander read law, and eventually, as a Benchler of the Middle Temple, succeeded his uncle John as legal adviser of the family; Thomas and George in default of more genteel openings were apprenticed to linendrapers. The girls turned out creditably. Soon after Mary's funeral there was a quiet little wedding at Claydon, when Susanna Denton gave her hand to Robert Townsend, the worthy
Dec. 19,
1650.

Rector of Radcliffe; Anne became the wife of George Woodward of Stratton Audley; Mary, some years later, married John, Robert Townsend's younger brother; Arabella and Dorothy remained spinsters, and the latter's gravestone at Hillesden, dated 1712, shows that she lived to a ripe old age. Young Edmund's hospitalities were on a much larger scale than his uncle thought prudent; he was rebuilding his house, and the Doctor speaks of himself as a wandering

Sept. 1652. Jew 'that have my Manors of Claydon, Hillesden, & Stowe to keep revell rout in.' Then suddenly the young Squire of Hillesden died, leaving his heir, scarce three years old, with two baby brothers, to be cared for by their great-uncle as he had cared for their father and uncles before them. The little Alexander was one of Sir Ralph's many godchildren, and very kindly did he also look after him.

Dr. Denton was called by his friend Sir George Wheler, 'the Speaker of the Parliament of women, for his polite conversation among ladies'; but he was not very happy in his own choice of a partner, though he made three several ventures. His first two wives are mere shadows; they left no mark on the family history, nor are even their names recorded on the Doctor's tombstone: but we learn from a scrap of paper in Lord Fermanagh's genealogical notes that one was 'Lady Muschamp of Yorkshire.' His third wife was Catherine, daughter of Bostock Fuller, Esq., of Tandridge Court, Herts, the widow of Edmund Bert, and the mother of several daughters. 'Queen Katherine,' as her husband called her, was a loud, hearty, vulgar woman, affectionate and impulsive. With a house in the then fashionable quarter of Covent Garden, they live in the best society of the town; they are dining with my Lady Suffolk, with my Lord Mulgrave, or with the Countess of Barrymore: Lady Fust and Lady Hastings dine with them, 'and Lady Heale etc. have invited themselves' to Mrs. Denton's at night. 'Doctor's widow,' as she was illogically styled in the family, was a woman of generous tastes, prompt to spend all the money that he made. The silk gowns of the Miss Berts excited the envy of the better-born and much worse-dressed Miss Verneys, and turned the head of the worthy apothecary William Gape, who with the help of three young Welshmen, Henry Foulkes and the brothers Francis and Robert Lloyd, made up the medicines and ran about upon the Doctor's errands. The marriage of Moll Bert and William Gape in 1648 has been already told. In the autumn of 1650 Dr. Denton writes: 'It pleased God to take my wife's Pegge to himselfe on friday last, for w^{ch} she is strainingly afflicted, I

Oct. 20,
1650.

pray God comfort her, the death and sicknesse of these two children have cost me above 100*l.* extraordinary which forces me to sell my plate.'

The next spring Sir Ralph's dearly loved sister Susan Alport died. Scarce five months after he had received the widower's broken-hearted letter he heard that Dr. Denton was marrying his remaining stepdaughter Betty Bert to 'Brother Alport,' and that he had 'leapt into a debt of neare 1,000*l.*; 500*l.* to Alport, and 200*l.* to Gape.' Sir Ralph thinks his gifts to his wife's daughters more liberal than wise, for, however good a physician he might be, he could not ensure himself a long life. The Doctor writes again from 'a Taverne,' 'having this day married Betty to Alport.' Sir Ralph is gently sarcastic in his congratulations: 'I wish your daughter Betty all the Hapinesse she can desire or hope for with my Bro: Alp:; God grant her life that shce may prevent the trouble of his Fourth wooing.' This pious wish was granted: Betty Bert did not give Mr. Alport the trouble of marrying again; she did so herself, and after his decease became the second wife of Mr. Leche of Carden.¹

Aug. 4,
1651

April 20,
1665.

After the family gathering at Claydon to celebrate Sir Ralph's return, Dr. Denton writes: 'Noble Knight, If you had taught me but halfe as well as you fedd me, I should have had more manners, and you more thanks. I know you have a lusty faith, and you cannot better imploy it then to beleeve that I wish and love you as well as they that tell y^u soe in more quaint termes, therefore take my downright hartly thanks without welt or garde. My wife is very considerate and returns you her thanks [Sir Ralph offered to pay her journey to Overton to visit Betty Alport], but consideringe that she hath putt you to trouble and charge

Nov. 10,
1653.

¹ Lord Fernanagh's note-book records the names of some of their children: 'John Alport dyed Cereb's; Robert Alport married Manwaring and left issue; Katherine married to Parson Wright; another daughter became Mrs. Dodd.' Betty also left 'several children' by her second husband, but the present family at Carden descend from Mr. Leche's first wife.

enough already, and therefore for feare, as Tom footman saies, you should not be worth a groat, she is resolved to save you 20s. and will not goe to Chesshire. Y^rs body and bones, Wm. D.' Mrs. Denton desires that Sir Ralph should send her an old shirt for 'clouts,' even if it should be his last.

Jan. 18,
1654.

Moll Gape affected sporting tastes, difficult of indulgence in the apothecary's London house. She writes to Sir Ralph after a visit to Claydon: 'Sir, Trey I thinke is just now upon her delivery, she hath had 12 puppyes but halfe of them bee dead, but them that are liveing are very fatt and by the next returne they will send you downe many thanks for the bones of your partridges and larkes. Pug is very well but hee is now very malancholy for hee hath sate alone in the darke all this night. Lewis hath bin att Billingsgate eateing oysters with her bulliboyes, wee dranke two bottles of rhenish wine in the must last night, when wee wished heartily for Gaffer Verney, and soe wee shall upon Fryday att dinner, but att night a fyg for the Knight: soe farewell.'

June 1654.

Another day she is determined to surprise Sir Ralph without his wig, 'for she threatens hard that if she comes to Claydon she will steale a paire of your breeches and putt them on, and then she will venture to see your bald pate, and she bids you clap while youle clap.' Mrs. Gape is always putting in quaint messages and postscripts. She writes across a business letter of her husband's to Sir Ralph: 'Yram Page's service to her executioner.' It is thought witty by these ladies to transpose a name. Mrs. Denton writes to Sir Ralph as 'Ris hplar,' signing herself 'Enirhtak Notned.'

If 'Doctor's widow' lacked refinement she was a good-natured, comfortable person. She mothered little Jack Verney after his return from Blois, and when he went to school 'Queen Katherine cried downe right to part with him.' Dr. Denton, with the sweet temper and ready tact that made him so welcome in other people's homes, was not likely to make difficulties in his own. He had been the most indulgent stepfather, and the birth of his own child Anne, in 1640, made him supremely happy. Sir Ralph's

affection for Nancy was another link between them, and 'Kate and Monkey' were always welcome at Claydon when the Doctor wished to send them out of town. 'Wife begins her march on Munday,' he writes to Sir Ralph on one of these occasions, 'and Munkay with her, I would advise you to quitt your country honourably before Munkey comes, least she make you fly it shamefully afterwards.' How much Nancy enjoyed the visits to her godfather we gather from a letter of Dr. Denton's about one of his own great-nephews: 'He is a forward young sparke and takes it ill if the whole house will not doe as he dictates, and talks as often and as boldly in the house as Munkey to old Raph.' 'Claydon doth not want us, soe much as we want Claydon,' wrote the Doctor in answer to one of his nephew's pressing invitations, 'nor Ralph want Kate, soe much as Kate wants Ralph, or else she lies abominably.'

Never was a friendship more perfect and more enduring than that between William Denton and Ralph Verney. 'I confesse Meum and Tuum devides most men,' wrote the latter about some business complications, 'but by the grace of God it shall never deuide us,' and it never did.

When Dr. Denton entered the profession a new world was opening to science: alchemy was giving place to chemistry, and medical treatment was beginning to be based upon clinical experiment and observation, rather than upon tradition and hypothesis. If his name is not associated with original research, at least he laboured assiduously to keep himself informed of the great discoveries of his age, both in England and on the Continent. Unwearied in his devotion to the sick and suffering, so little hardened by familiarity that he could never attend a death-bed without being deeply moved, the trusted adviser and reconciler in many dark hours of family history, with a large hopefulness and toleration born of his wide acquaintance with human nature, a caustic tongue, and a generous heart, he maintained the high traditions of his noble profession. He was a voracious reader, specially of theology and philosophy; as a mere youth he wrote that divinity should 'be ever att both

ends of other studys, for without that there can be no true content in any.'

March
1648.

Dr. Denton rushed about in town and out of town, just as our busy doctors do to-day. 'It would be a very great hindrance to him if he should be absent from the towne but tenn dayes, for he hath been offered a great deale of money to goe but fivety miles out of towne, and he could nott.' When he hopes to allow himself a short holiday at Claydon, he is stopped by a message from a patient, after he had sent his man on, and was actually about 'to putt foot in coach.' This is his account of a week's work :

June 1650.

'Dear Raph, I have since Thursday last (the day my boy was cutt for the stone and one round flat nugget was taken out about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an oz weight) beene almost confounded with business, so that I have scarce had a minute's time to putt pen to paper, and this very day betweene attendinge my Lady Syd[enham] in a vomitt (who was as sick a creature as ever I sawe) and attending the sessions in giving evidence uppon life and death in a businesse of the murther of Mr. Ozler the Ser: in w^{ch} I doubt one Mr Bovy will suffer, though I am clearly satisfied he died not of the wounds ; and this with my not receiving any letter from you this week (though happily it may ere this be at my house where I have not beene these many hours) must excuse my cutted writing.' 'I have been sent for downe by my Lady Temple but denied her,' he writes another time, 'but if I thought T. Isham would be sick I would make a virtue of necessity.'

March
1654.

Though very loath to leave town, the Doctor has perforce to visit Lady Wenman at Thame Park : she was a Hampden, Aug. 1657. a connection of Sir Alexander Denton's wife. 'I writt to my Lady hopinge to have had a Quietus es, but her answere was not able to endure the hearinge of my not cominge, soe I doe resolve to wait on her this week, I must make things ready to put my L^d and my Lady in a course for phisick.' Sept. 8, 1657. He reports progress to Sir Ralph. 'My Lady was purged yesterday, & my Lord vomited today, and untill I have settled them, I cannot with any conveniency stirre any

whither.' He gets over to Hillesden, but must fly back again, having only left my Lord and my Lady physie enough to last till the 15th.

All through his early years he had done his business on horseback, but about the age of forty-five the desire for a coach gradually grew upon him, and 'Queen Katherine' yearned for a phaeton. Sir Ralph warned him that 'a coach were more convenient than healthfull for you, but you may venture on it, for I will exercise you. If you resolve to keepe one tell me soe, and deferre it for a time, the Weather will not yet bee ill, and tell me if you like a coach with one end, and a Bed as are used in France, or with 2 ends, y' first is light, and holds but 6, the other heavy and holds 8, and soe more apt to breake, and kill horses too.' Accidents are frequent with the bad roads and heavy carriages.

'I thanked God we gott safe to Claydon on Satterday night,' the Doctor wrote to Sir Ralph, who was absent, 'but I left one of my coach horses dead at Alisbury which doth much disgruntle me, not soe much for y^e valew as for y^e disfurnishinge me to all intents and purposes, for he was not only for my coach but he paced as easy as any sitt horse, and if I had had occasion to have ridden 40 or twice 40 miles quickly, he would have done that to. Soe much for a dead horse.' Another time his nephew, Mun Denton, is to 'have his horses in readines to helpe pull me through the dirt from Alisbury.' On a journey to Cheshire, for Betty Alport's confinement, 'Doctor lam'd but 3 of his 4 horses by the way soe hee got safe though not sound to Overton'; with such delays the crisis was over before the Doctor's arrival. He managed, however, to be in time for the christening, which was 'not without a fidler and the merry cup, and the toast of Sir Ralph's health.' The return journey was equally difficult; the coachman got an ague, 'soe betweene lame horses and lame coachman and rayny weather we are to gett home as we can. My mare proved well beyond expectation, but at present is gravelled and soe we are coach bound.' The sick coach-horses of the family, like the children, came to Claydon for change of air and good

Sept. 18,
1652.

June 4,
1657.

country food. 'I quite forgot to see my coach when last att Claydon,' writes Dr. Denton to Sir Ralph. 'I pray give it a visitt, & if mouldy, I know you are soe cleanly a person as to gett it wiped.'

April 5,
1655.

A physician's fees in the seventeenth century seem large in proportion to the pay of other professions, and the laity then as now grumbled and paid. 'Sir Theodore Mayerne is buried,' writes Dr. Denton, 'and died worth 140,000*l*.' Sir Ralph thought 30*l*. too little to pay Dr. Denton for his attendance on his wife during her confinement; but for his pressing poverty he would have sent him 50*l*., equal to about 200*l*. of our present money. Dr. Radcliffe's regular fees were estimated to bring him in an income of at least 4,000*l*. a year; Dr. Mead's were valued at between 5,000*l*. and 6,000*l*. Sir George Wheeler's sickness after a Christmas dinner at Dr. Denton's cost him 'the best part of 100 pounds.'

Sir Ralph was glad to borrow money of his wealthy neighbour, Dr. Bate, the famous Oxford physician, and when he found the interest burdensome he vainly hoped that the Doctor might be willing to take land in settlement of his claims.

Many physicians were men of good family and social position; several of them were spending large fortunes in the most public-spirited way. But some of the old families in the shires refused to admit a medical man into their circle. Dr. Laurence Wright, physician in ordinary to Oliver Cromwell, who held a distinguished office in the College of Physicians, and had a large and lucrative practice, was desirous that his only son should make a fashionable marriage. Sir Ralph wrote for him to Sir Justinian Isham to introduce the son as a suitor to one of his daughters.

Sir Ralph had no idea that this aspirant had been rejected unseen and unheard three months before. But the Miss Ishams had determined that the son of Cromwell's doctor must be a vulgar creature, and a snuffling Puritan; their aunt, Lady Elizabeth Denton, and their father's friend, Mr. John Stuteville, express their views to Sir

Justinian. The suitor is acknowledged to be 'a tall slender handsome man but somewhat blacke; Very gallant, but civill with all (a quality rare enough in these times); nay more, that hee is Religious too . . . yet not a fit match for Sir Justinian Isham's daughters . . . In these degenerating times, the gentry had need to close neerer together, and make a banke and bulwarke against that Sea of Democracy which is over running them: and to keepe their descents pure and untainted from that Mungrill breed, which would faine mixe with them. . . . They live contentedly and happily as they are, and (if they bee not burdensome to you, as they are not to my Lady) their desire is, not yet to change their condition, but upon greater advantage and preferment, then they are like to meete with heere. A farre lesse estate with more honour would better suite them then soo great a one without gentility: which (to use their owne words) they account of but as a guilded pill, guilded in his fortunes, but bitter in his extraction.' ¹

The eldest Miss Isham died a spinster; the second, true to her principles, married a poor knight of irreproachable descent, with an old house and garden; the ambitious Dr. Laurence Wright and his wife died soon afterwards, within a few months of each other,² leaving the 'guilded pill' to the sole enjoyment of their ample income. William Gape writes to Sir Ralph that Lady Hobart 'wants your Doctor in towne to help him to Dr Wright's patients.' Oct. 9,
1657.

Dr. Denton's letters are written in a neat, precise hand on small paper, they are short and to the point, and free from the long-winded compliments of the day. His customary ending is 'Vale,' and when he has greetings to send he compresses them into three words, 'all to all.' 'I alwaies scale with my Armes or with Æsculapius,' he says, when asking Sir Ralph whether his letters have been opened. In the summer of 1653 he had a short but severe attack of

¹ *Isham MSS.* No. 353, by permission of the late Sir Charles Isham, Bart.

² There is a monument to them in the Church of South Weald in Essex.

illness, to the great displeasure and inconvenience of the invalids of the family, who were accustomed to count upon his professional services 'as a friend,' as Penelope expressed it, without always feeling it incumbent upon them, as Sir Ralph did, to press a fee upon his acceptance. Pen's husband was very ill just when Dr. Denton was laid up himself. 'Hee is in great dangour,' wrote his wife, 'without it dos pleas god to aswag the sweling; it swels soe, and into his throt, that if the surgin cannot A swag it, I fere it may choke him in a short time . . . if I sell my self to my skin, I must go a long with my Husband to Oxford and have the opininion of a surgon and a doctor both; . . . and the chargis will be as great to me if I bring them hom to Fauler, to give them doble fees, and entertaynment by sides.'

The Doctor meanwhile was utilising the enforced leisure of a fever in a way he would have forbidden to any of his patients: he wrote of himself from his sick-room as 'an old, old, old man, with a bed-full of books.' In August, having shaken off his distemper and attended nephew Smith through a critical attack of illness, he is preparing to accompany Sir Ralph on a journey to Yorkshire about Mrs. Sherard's affairs. He is still too weak to ride, and he cannot go 'without a tumbrill or a Jumblinge Joanie. . . . I have 2 pittifull horses, but I hope Claydon Commons will batten them . . . it is high time to be at Yorke, therefore I pray pitch uppon Munday sennight to begin our march, that we may be there by Thursday night, because the Court sits only on Fridaies and Satterdaies. Be sure you have bottle beere to comfort my hart. . . . Expect a trunke and male and boxe and other lumber, which take care of at your perill. Commend me to Harry and tell him that if he had beene a right Brother of the Bridle, he would have given me a particular account of the Cupp at Brackley and especially of Mr. Winwood's horse.'

Aug. 25,
1653.

March
1653.

His letters are generally full of Sir Ralph's money difficulties, but Dr. Denton sometimes appeals to him for help in his own. Mr. Mead has called upon him for a payment. 'The thinge is much out of my noddle, and

I cannot at present finde my papers to rectify my plumbeous cerebrosity, I pray rubb your cerebellum and looke out my notes and your papers and tell me the story and what I shall doe in it.' 'I will cyther pronge Mr. Mead till you come or get off' for half, but I will tugge hard to come off, for nee pence noe pence.'

Sir Ralph has bought a mare of Dr. Denton which was a favourite of Nancy's. 'Madcapp saith though she sould you the mare, yett she did not sell you the colt, therefore she laies her commands on you, to midwife it out, and to tittle it upp and to bringe it with you in your coach, and then she will teach it all her Monkey tricks.' March 1
1654

A case came on in the law courts between Sir Ralph and Lady Baltinglas about a rabbit warren and the authenticity of a title deed, the busy Doctor made time to go and hear the trial, which went against Sir Ralph. 'If you will come upp quickly whilst things are fresh in my head I will tell you more particulars. . . . Queen Katherine commands you to sett upp her wherry and make hast for she is in great want of you.' Oct. 28,
1654

Dr. Denton, like Sir Edmund, had invested money in the draining of the Fens; and he refers to this business at intervals; 'I am in great Briars about Vermuyden, he will I find be made a Bankrupt within few daies.' 'I want your noddle here, for on Satterday next, I am like to be a man or a mouse in Vermuyden's affaire whose land will be exposed for sale for non payment of taxes and what to doe in it I know not in point of purchase or not purchase. . . .' Jan 24,
1656

Sir Ralph replies: 'To D' about his Fen.' 'I see you are in some trouble about Vermuyden's businesse. I know not what to say to it for if you purchasse of those that sell it for non payment of Taxes, perhaps it may mount high, and the title may bee subject to a chancery suite.' The Doctor writes later: 'Hearinge nothinge from that monster of men, that is all tounge & noe hands to write, nor feet to walk hither, I take it for granted that there is nothinge to be done with Vermuyden, by which meanes, I am putt upp on a great straight for present money, & that a good' Jan. 27,
1656.

June 31
1656.

sunme . . . the Crophe is downe & will be lost if I gett not money presently. . . .'

March 5,
1657.

Dr. Denton speaks again of the land he had bought and sold in the Fens, from Mr. Stanley and Mr. Crave, and how he has lost on each transaction, though he 'had it double and treble in highe acknowledgements, fine ayry things.' 'My Lord Fleetwood assaults me might & maine for Vermuyden. . . .' 'I never had more need of a Vulpone then in this affair.' 'Vermuyden still plaies his tricks,' but 'he hath a cur by the eares': the Doctor wonders that 'Never soe many Artifices, raps and snares,' should be 'used to catch a simple phisnicary, and yett he walks alone & upright.'

July 4,
1657.

Aug 27,
1656.

Oct. 1658.

The Doctor, not having enough to do, turned his attention to farming his Fenlands. He finds the Fens less sickly than the high country. 'I doubt whether I have any oats (though my next neighbours have) so good as to yeeld 17^s a quarter; they are to make oatmell. My man told me I had 60 load well ended . . . I can hardly be reasoned out of a dayry, I am sure that must yeeld somethinge every day Any other way of manuaginge of it I must run the hazard of a foole & a knave & this way I only hazard the knave, & if I can gett him that I am about, I shall be very confident of his honesty.' 'Accordinge to what Brassit made for himselfe by his owne confession & by demonstration, 5 Cowes made in 2 daies 15 lbs of cheese which he sold for 4^d the lb. which is 6^d per diem a Cow, besides the advantage of whay, & what was taken in the house, which must make 12^s or 20^s an acre rent. I know you would be glad to be rid of some of your poore tenants, & if you have any that are honest & industrious, I will stock them at my charge with 10 or 20 Cowes, soe they will give me 2^s a Cowe a weeke, but I beleeve, I might gett reasonable well at 18^d the week & soe my man hath profered mee'

But even Dr. Denton's energy could not suffice to carry on a dairy business in the Fens and a town practice at the same moment, and after a short experience of both he was

obliged to own that he was as weary as could be of 'stock-inge and plowinge & daryinge,' and that if he could get others to rent his cows 'they shall dary & not I.' 'Queen Katherine' complains at intervals that 'the Doctor is gon to the Fenes, to try if he can get another ague.'

In the autumn of 1654, and during the greater part of 1655, Dr. Denton and Sir Ralph had a family sorrow and anxiety which touched both of them nearly. Of all those who had suffered in the Verney family by the disruption of home ties, perhaps Sir Edmund's younger girls, Mary and Betty, were the most to be pitied. Without the careful training of their parents, or the advantages of education and society which their elder sisters had enjoyed, they had grown up in such unsettled and troublous times that the shelter of his roof and the protection of their mother's house-keeper was all that their elder brother could give them during his exile. The married sisters did their best for them, but Pen was too poor, and Margaret's husband too ill-tempered, to entertain them long. They stayed with Cary Gardiner, and at Claydon after Sir Ralph's return, though he refused to let them live with him altogether, as he was going up and down to his bachelor lodgings in London, and he wished his sisters to be under the care of an older woman. He had been diligently corresponding with various friends about marriages for them, but up to this time with indifferent success.

'Cary hopes to match Moll to one about 50; his wife was Lady Ayres who died last yeare. Cary told him Sir Ralph would allow Mall 60*l.* p^a annu during her life.' But this not very attractive match had fallen through. Mary had lived to the age of five-and-twenty without being specially necessary to any one; she was perpetually scolded and admonished, little sympathised with or understood. We learn, therefore, with less wonder and indignation than her relations did, and more of sorrowing pity, that she loved 'not wisely but too well' the first man who singled her out for love and admiration. Mary had been ailing, and the Doctor, with the kindness he always showed to his sister's

Oct. 9,
1651.

Jan. 19,
1654.

children, invited her to his house in London. The visit was a long one, and Sir Ralph received accounts of her health from the Doctor, from Mr. Gape, and from Robert Lloyd, who was on a footing of friendship and intimacy in both houses. She was undergoing the severe medical treatment then in fashion; Dr. Denton writes: 'Mall began to speake about 2 of the clock on Thursday morning and is better than she was; she hath not yett the command of opening her mouth, but lispeth in her speech and if a little gagge (which she keepes betweene her teeth) slip out, she hath much ado to open her mouth againe.' She recovered from this sickness, but as time went on Dr. Denton became uneasy as to the cause of Mary's continued ill-health and depression of spirits, and it was doubly painful to him to reflect that her acquaintance with Robert Lloyd had been formed under his own roof. The Doctor did his best to shelter the unfortunate girl, and to keep her secret, but he was in grave anxiety about it. An Act of great severity had recently been passed, by which Mary, as she well knew, was liable to public exposure and imprisonment, and trials for such offences were actually going on at that time. Katherine Denton and Mary Gape, who seem to have been substantially kind to her, were the last women from whom reticence could be expected. Various plans were discussed for Mary to go to Ireland, and even to 'the Barbadoes,' but eventually a quiet lodging was found for her in London, where Dr. Denton and the Gapes looked after her, and Sir Ralph paid her expenses. Her sisters, who were deeply shocked and pained, were harsh and angry, and Tom and Henry were loud in condemning her; Tom was at the same time blustering about his determination to vindicate his sister's honour, when the only service he could render her was to hold his tongue. Sir Ralph was kinder and more considerate; he did not find Moll easy to manage, she was too unhappy to be reasonable; but she showed some courage and resolution. 'The best I can expect,' she wrote to Sir Ralph, 'is to be brought in to a very low condishon . . . but I have a harte that will gooe throw a grett dell of paine; I am in hoope that I may over

come it all; it will ether mende mee or ende mee.' On her recovery she was anxious to assert her independence. Mr. Gape wrote: 'Shee pretends now att this extremity to serve a lady and sayth she hath a place ready. I tell her when shee knowes y^e misery and hardship of service shee will better value a brother's affection. She sayth shee cannot live without R. what ever shee endures. I asked her how could shee enjoy him in service. Shee sayth it shall bee a place where shee may often see and hear from him.' Dr. Denton was always pleading her cause with Sir Ralph, but he thought Mary had no right after her brother's past kindness 'to rant and stand upon termes.' 'I have some thoughts of visiting her,' he wrote, 'to give her a rattle for her rant, but am not yett resolved.'

Poor Mary found the bread of dependence quite as bitter as the apothecary had foretold: 'Brother tell now I never knew what it was to earne my Leving but now I doe, for I have not had a bitt to eate tell I have worckeded furst for it. . . . Brother as I have desarved harde youseg so I have received. . . . Now my earnest request to you is that you will please to lett mee know whether you will alow mee a lively hooode or no. . . . I had not a shue to ware tell I did earne a pure. . . . I know some that dooe dailey eatte at y^r tabell have as Ill desarved y^t relefe as I have, and in theare carieg have binne as onworthy, but they have fownde more frindeshipe then I can; Bro: you had delit more churatabeller with mee to a layed the exstremitey of the law agaiunst mee att the fust, then to a releved mee for the present and to suffer mee to starve now.' . . . 'If you will not please to relive mee I most to Claydon, and if I doo periesh it shalle bee att your dooare . . . for I cannot Live by the are. . . . I am confieyent that your doges eatte that as I would be glade of.' Sir Ralph gave her the allowance she asked for.

Mary Verney and Robert Lloyd were married on November 2, 1655, 'in Paddington Church by Anthony Dod the Minister,' and the later chapters of her life, so far as we know them, were better and happier than this early one.

March 5,
1658.

We have another glimpse of the Doctor's home life, in 1658. He was suddenly attacked with illness in the beginning of March; his wife was terribly alarmed and wrote to Sir Ralph, as everybody else did in trouble: 'It is now 3 of the Clocke in the morning and I have bin up all this night with the D^r. he hath had a most violent fitt and sick unto Death and burns like any fire, and what will itt come to, the Lorde he knoweth. To have him thus sicke and noe freinds about mee, makes mee att my witts end to know which way to turne my selfe; therefore I shall begg the favour of you that you will come to mee; for he is so unable to beare this Illnesse, that I feare it may come to a worse effect.' Sir Ralph was of course greatly disturbed, but before he could reach town the acute symptoms had subsided, and the Doctor was rating his wife soundly for troubling him: 'very small matters putt her beyond her sences, & you are not to obey her in those cases . . . you have oblidged me by your readlines . . . of which I was as well satisfied before, but I doe not love to give trouble unnecessarily for it was plainely an agew.' As soon as he was a little better he was quite beyond 'Queen Katherine's' control, he had '5 fitts' but he would 'go abrode every day, his fitt days & all others alike'; he was attending Lady Fairfax daily, 'who is now upon the recovery'; and to Sir Ralph's anxious remonstrances he would only reply 'my agew is gone, God make me thankful . . . when you have obeyed my wife as long as I have done, you may then learne to be wiser.'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

